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INDIA AT THE DAWN OF THE  
CHRISTIAN ERA.*A Paper read before the Mythic Society*

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India the wonderland of the East, as it is even now called, was made known to the West, when the world-conqueror Alexander the Great forced open her gates on the north-west. Our knowledge of India all of at a definite character may be said to extend no farther than this period, as according to the most recent authority, his connexion with India was not much more than a great raid. It is perhaps matter of common knowledge that he had to give up his idea of carrying his conquests right up to the eastern limits of the land, (according to his own notion of the configuration of the earth,) owing to a mutiny among his soldiers headed by his cavalry commander Koinos. Before leaving India, however, he divided his conquests on this side of the Indian Caucasus, into three viceroyalties as follows :—

I. Paropanisadae, the country west of the Indus, with Oxyartes, the father of Roxana, for its viceroy.

II. The Punjab including in it the kingdom of Taxila, and that of Porus, that of the Sophytes together with the territories of the Oxydrachoi and the Malloi, under the viceroy Philip, son of Machetas; leaving the civil administration in the hands of the native princes.

III. Sindh including the kingdom of Mousikanos, Oxykanos, Sambus and Maeris of Patalene, under Peithon the son of Agenor, for its viceroy.

Philip was murdered in a mutiny, before the death of Alexander, and his place was taken by Eudamos who remained in India till called away in 317 B.C. to help Eumenes against Antigonus of Asia, the most powerful among

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the Diadochi. When the Macedonian Empire was partitioned a second time in 321 B.C. (consequent on the death of Perdiccas, the Regent of the first partition,) the Indian Province, east of the Indus, was left out of account, as Peithon had to withdraw to the western bank of the great river. About 305 B.C. Seleucus Nikator made an attempt to revive the Empire of Alexander in this region, but had to relinquish his hold upon the whole of Afghanistan and enter into a humiliating treaty with Chandragupta, the Maurya Emperor of India. This personage is believed to have been in the camp of Alexander in the Punjab, and, thrown upon his own resources as the great Macedonian turned away from the banks of the Ravi, he took advantage of the confusion resulting from the departure of Alexander to overthrow the ruling Nanda in Magadha, and set up as the first Emperor of India known to history. In the course of fifteen years he was able to make himself so strong as to fight Seleucus not only on equal terms, but also to extort from him such a valuable cession of territory as Afghanistan up to the Hindu-Kush. For three generations this dynasty held its power undiminished. His grandson Asoka, the great Buddhist Emperor of India, was able to hold his own with the successors of Seleucus, and maintained with them the diplomatic relations thus begun by his grandfather. It seems to be well attested that both Seleucus Nikator and Ptolemy Philadelphus had sent ambassadors to the courts of Chandragupta and Bindusara, although scholars are not wanting yet who consider the particular edict of Asoka a mere boast. With the death of Asoka about 230 B.C. the Mauryan Empire loses its hold upon the more powerful and distant of its vassals, and the days of the dynasty are numbered.

From this event to the year 319 A.D., the date of the rise to power of the Imperial Guptas, the history of India is yet, quite uncertain although we are able to gain a few glimpses as to the general features of the history of that period. The Asiatic Empire of the Seleucidae was attacked simultaneously by the Romans and the Gauls from the west and north-west, and the Parthians from the east. About the beginning of the second century B.C., Parthia declared herself independent under Arsakes, and Bactria under Eukratides. This was but the reflex action of the movements of the nomad tribes in the far-off plains of Mongolia. The great tribe of the Hiung-nu fell, with all the fervour of neighbourly love, upon the Yu-etchi, and dislodged them from their then habitat in the plains of Zungaria. These in their turn fell upon the Wu-sung, killed the Wu-sung chieftain in battle, and marched further upon the region then in the occupation of the Se, Sok or Śakas. These last had to make room for them along the right bank of the Oxus and occupy the country protected by the Indian Caucasus. The Yu-etchi

were themselves defeated by the son of the late Wu-sung chieftain. When his father fell in battle he found a secure asylum with the Hiung-nu, who now helped him to regain his lost patrimony. It was in the course of these movements that the Śakas and possibly some of the Hiung-nu moved down the Kabul valley into India, and occupied the country on the right bank of the Indus, right down even to Gujarat. It is perhaps one of their out-settlements on the Jumna that the coins and other antiquities of Muttra would seem to warrant.

While all this was taking place across the borders of India, in India itself there was going forward a revolution of no less consequence. The Mauryan Empire was overthrown by Pushyamitra Sunga, the Maurya general, in spite of the loyalist minister, a brother-in-law of Yegñasēna Śātakarni of the Dekhan. The usurper's strength was tried by a triple war:—1. against Menander, ruler of Kabul; 2. against Kāravēla, the Kalinga ruler of Orissa; 3. against the loyalist Yegñasēna and in behalf of a counter-claimant to the throne of the kingdom of Vidharbha. Though for the time successful against all these, the empire had suffered vital injuries. The Dekhan kingdom or viceroyalty becomes so powerful that the Āndhras establish an imperial position themselves, and render their quota of service by holding out against the Śaka invaders from the north-west and west. It must have been in the course of these wars that the occasion should have arisen for the founding of the era which now goes by the name of Vikramāditya, and that under the name of Śaka. As to both these eras and the circumstances of their origin there is very considerable difference of opinion among scholars. In the course of the political shiftings described above, a clan of the Yu-etchi by name Kushāṇa was able to push its way into India and establish a kingdom in the Punjab including Kāsmir. The greatest ruler among them whose empire came into touch with the Chinese Empire on the one side and the Parthian on the other, is Kanishka, the Constantine of the Buddhism of the greater vehicle (Mahāyānism). Learned scholars associate him with both the eras above referred to, while there are yet others who would dissociate him from either and refer him to a period later than both. None of them, however, take him beyond the period I have marked at the beginning. At the very beginning of the Christian era then the Punjab and the frontier Province including Kāsmir were under the Kushāṇas or their immediate predecessors or their successors. Gujarat and Malva, including northern Konkan, were under the Śakas.

During the period marked out above, we have been passing from the supremacy of Buddhism (if the expression could be regarded as appropriate at all), through a reassertion of the Brahman ascendancy, on to a final compromise, ending on the one side in Mahāyānist Buddhism, and on the other in

the Hinduism of the Gita. For as Prof. Kern has it on the authority of the Tibetan historian Tārānath and the Saddharmapundarika, the founder of the Mādhyamika school of Buddhism, Nāgārjuna, was a disciple of the Brahman Rāhulābhadra who was much indebted to Sage Krishna. Paraphrased this means no less than that these teachers drew a part of their inspiration from the Gita. This is borne out by the importance that attaches to Bhakti (devotion) in Mahāyānist Buddhism and later Hinduism.

During all this period of active mutations both in religion and politics, South India would appear to have been out of this great vortex. This is a delusion due more to lack of information than to a lack of history. The edicts of Asoka mention the Chola, Pandya, Kerala, Satiyaputra, and Ceylon, among those with whom he entered into diplomatic relations. He thought it worth his while to send his son and daughter to Ceylon as missionaries. These facts would put it beyond a doubt that there was some communication between Magadha and Ceylon generally by way of the sea. It cannot be that the neighbouring coast was not brought into touch likewise with the north. The edicts of Asoka found in the Chitaldroog District make it certain that there was some connexion in all likelihood by way of land, and by the east coast. The Ceylonese tradition, as embodied in the Mahāvamsa, is quite in support of this conclusion. Between the Maharashtra and Malva there was a great trunk road notwithstanding the great forest region between them. This road it is that has given us the name Dakshināpatha (Dekhan). This road wound its way probably over the hills by way of Burhanpur into western Malva. The middle region was the forest; which it continued to be even up to the days of Harsha.

During this period, and for a long time after, Hindustan, (the country north of the Vindhya) kept touch with the outer world by way of land mainly; the south kept herself in contact with the rest of the world chiefly by way of the sea. It is not always that the Hindus waited for others to come to them for goods, is in evidence in a variety of ways. There is first the statement of Cornelius Nepos who has it that Q. Metellus Celer received from the King of the Suevi some Indians who had been driven by storm into Germany in the course of a voyage of commerce. This is quite a precise fact, and is borne out by a number of tales of voyages with the horrors attending navigation depicted in the liveliest colours in certain classes of writings both in Sanskrit and Tamil. Among the places mentioned in the latter classes of sources are those in the East Indian Archipelago, such as Java (Śāvāham), Sambhava (Karpūrasambhavam), Kaṭāha (Sumatra), and Kālāham (Burma) not to mention China. It would thus appear that there was some very con-

siderable activity in maritime commerce. They used to have light houses to warn ships and one such is described at the great port at the mouth of the Kavery, a big palmyra trunk carrying on the top of it a huge oil lamp.

On either coast were towns of great commercial importance. Beginning with the coast of the Arabian Sea and passing over the ports beyond the gion of South India, the first town of importance is what the classical geographers call Tyndis (Tonḍi) where Quilandy now stands. Opposite to it lies what was called Liuke (White Island) now going under the name Sacrifice Rock or 'Veḷḷiyan Kallu' among the people. The Ophir of these geographers is located by some at the modern Beypore. South from this was the great mart of Muziris (Muyirikkōḍa, Koḍungalur or Cranganur) the port of Vanji or Karur, the capital of the Cheras, with the river-mouth Pseudostomos (Aḷimukham or false mouth). This is the port to which navigators turned their course when, through the enterprise of Harpalos, the south-west monsoon was discovered. Passing this port we come next to Bakare (Vaikkarai) the port of Nyeacnda in the territory of the Pandion of Modura (Nirḱkunṇam in the kingdom of the Pandians at Madura). After this the classical geographers mention only Cape Comorin (Kumari). Passing Kumari they lead us into the Argalic (Argali in Tamil, Mahodadi in Sanskrit) gulf; and thence into the port of Kolkoi (Korkai). It is here that the Island of Taprabane finds mention, and naturally enough. The origin of this name for Ceylon has been the cause of very ingenious speculation. It is regarded on the one hand as the equivalent of Tamraparni, (the Tambapanni of the Buddhists.) There is another derivation more fanciful than this, Tap Ravana as a corruption of dipa Ravana. The more likely and much less ingenious origin would be dip Ruan, Ruan being one of the kingdoms in the Island of Ceylon, about the beginning of the Christian Era, according to the Mahavamsa; and that the kingdom to which sailors should inevitably go from the Argalic Gulf. Proceeding still further through the Gulf these sailors came to the eastern emporium of Tonḍi, the great mart for Chinese wares and commodities, from the Eastern Archipelago. Further north of this was Puhār at the mouth of the Kavery; the next port of importance on this side was Maisolos as Pliny calls it (Masulipatam).

To take up the political geography of South India as a whole then, the country south of the Krishna was divided among "the three crowned kings" and seven chieftains, with an eighth coming somewhat later. It is the coast region and the more open country that belonged to the kings, while the middle regions of hills and forests belonged to the chieftains, and perhaps even a few tribes (Nagas and others). The East Coast from near the mouth of the Krishna to the south of Tonḍi, in the Zamindari of Ramnad, belonged to

the Chola, although midway between the kingdom proper and its northern viceroyalty of Kanchi lay the hill-country round Tirukoilur, in the possession of a class of chieftains named Malayaman, very often loyal supporters of their suzerain, occasionally truculent and rebellious. South of the Chola kingdom lay that of the Pandya which extended from coast, to coast, and embraced within its borders the modern districts of Madura and Tinneveli, and the State of Travancore, taking in also a part of Coimbatore and Cochin. This included in it the chieftaincies of Aay (the Aioi of Ptolemy) round the Podiyil hill in the Western Ghats, and of Evvi round about the port of Korkai in Tinneveli. There was besides the domains of Pēhan round the Palnis which comes under their sphere of influence, as well. North of this and along the Western Ghats on the sea-side lay the territory of the Chera; the territory stretching across the Palghat gap through Salem and Coimbatore; and south Mysore was parcelled out among a number of chieftains corresponding to the modern Pālayagars, whose allegiance was at the disposal of either, but the more powerful, of their neighbour kings. Such were the Irungō of Arayam, Pāri of Parambunāḍ, Adiyaman of Tagaḍūr (Dharmapuri) and Ōri of the Kollimalais. The first of these was within Mysore territory proper, and to the east of his domain lay the Gangas, and Kongu to the south.

These chieftaincies were the bone of contention between the Cholas and the Cheras. When our period begins the Cholas are supreme under Karikāl, who ascended the throne perhaps after defeating the Chera and Pandya in a battle at Veṇṇil (Koivenni as it is now called) in the Tanjore District. He was a remarkable sovereign who, in many ways, contributed to the permanent welfare of his subjects, and has consequently been handed down to posterity as a beneficent and wise monarch. He constructed the embankments for the Kavery, and his chief port Puhār (the great emporium of the East coast.) His was a long reign, and taken along with those of his two predecessors and the successor next following him, constitutes the period of the first Chola ascendancy in the South. In the reign of his successor a great catastrophe befell Puhār, and the city and port were both destroyed. This was a hard blow to the ascendancy of the Cholas; but Karikāl had, after defeating his contemporary Chera, given one of his daughters in marriage to the son of his vanquished rival. This alliance stood the Cholas in good stead. Karikāl's successor began his reign with a victory, which his heir-apparent won for him, against the Chera and Pandya combined at Kāriyār, in the Salem District. When Puhār was destroyed there was a civil war, owing perhaps to the untimely death of the young Chola prince; and the Chera ruler for the time being, advanced through the central region. He intervened in favour of his cousins with effect as against the rival



claimants of royal blood, and restored the Chola dynasty to some power; but the ascendancy surely enough passed from them to the Chera. The Chera ascendancy under the Red-Chera (Śenguttuvan) lasted only one generation; in the reign of his successor the Pandyas rose to greater importance and the Chera suffered defeat and imprisonment at his hands. This Pandya ascendancy probably lasted on somewhat longer till about the rise of the Pallavas in Kanchi. This course of the political centre of gravity of power in Southern India is borne out in very important particulars by the Ceylon Chronicle called the *Mahavamsā*. According to this work the Cholas were naturally the greatest enemies of the Singalese rulers. There were usurpers from the Chola country in Ceylon in the first century B.C.; and there were invasions and counter-invasions as well. On one occasion the Chola invaders carried away 12,000 inhabitants of Ceylon and set them to work at 'the Kavery' as the Chronicle has it. This looks very much like an exploit of Karikāla, seeing that it was he who built the city of Puhār. King Gajabāhu of Ceylon was present at the invitation of the Red-Chera, to witness the celebration of a sacrifice and consecration of the temple to the "Chaste Lady" (Pathiney Devi) at Vanji, on the West coast.

The ascendancy of the Chera, however, passed away, as was already mentioned, to the Pandyas in the course of one single generation. The Red-Chera was succeeded by his son, "the Chera of the elephant look", who was his father's viceroy at Tonḍi, and figured prominently in the wars of his predecessor in the middle region. He was defeated and taken prisoner in a battle which he had to fight with the contemporary Pandyan, designated the victor at Talaialnḡanam. With this mishap to the ruler passes away the Chera ascendancy. The Pandyans of Madura take their turn now and perhaps continued to hold the position of hegemony up to the time that the Pallavas rise into importance. This in brief and in very general terms was the political history of South India at the beginning and during the early centuries of the Christian Era.

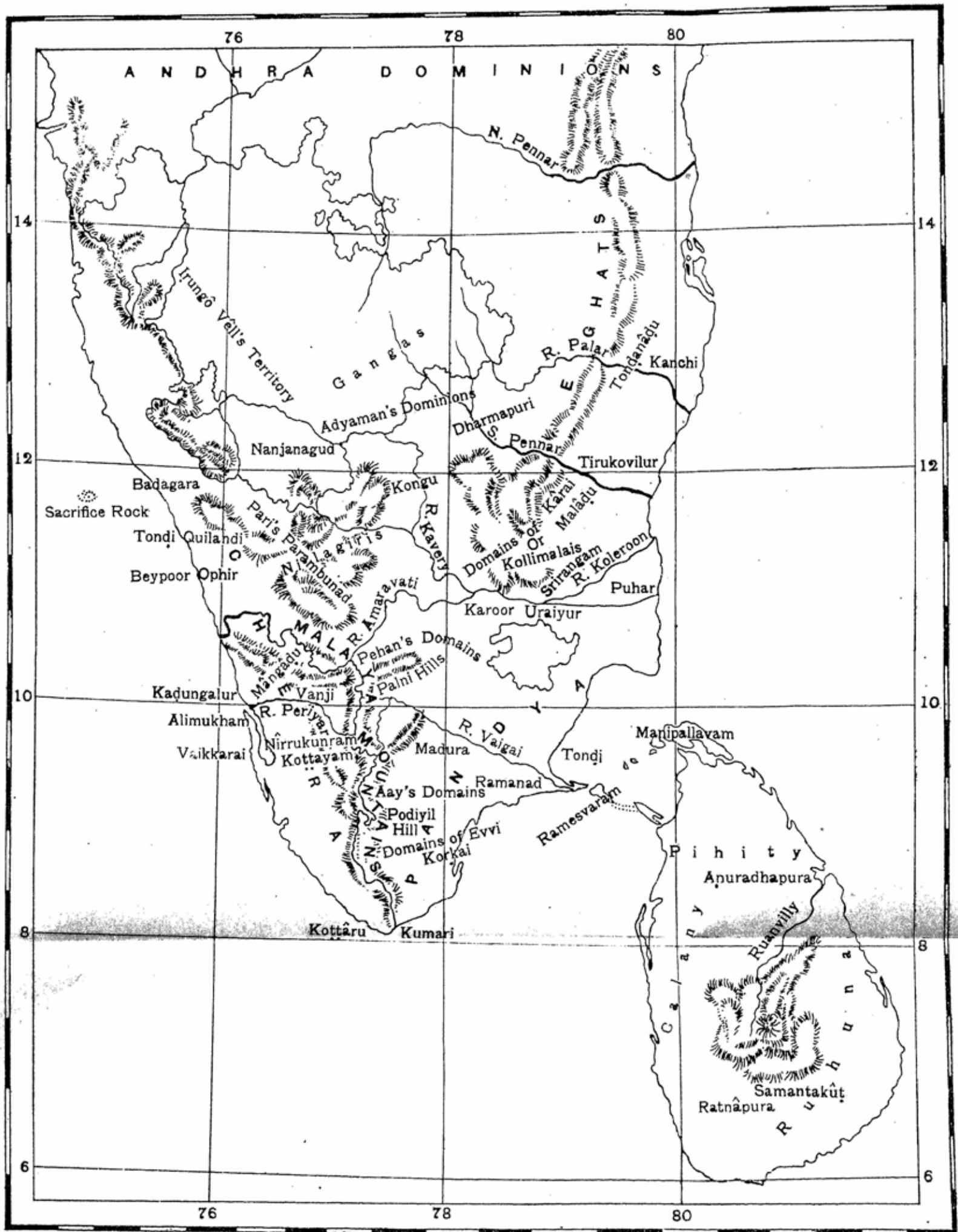
Passing on from the political to the industrial condition of India, we have already described the principal sea-ports, both on the western and eastern seaboard. If, as has been pointed out, there were as many thriving ports, and if foreign merchants sought these for trade at considerable risk of pirates, and if there had been as much enterprise in sea-going among the inhabitants of the country, the conclusion is irresistible that the country had a prosperous industry, and, so it appears certainly to have been on examination. Apart from the complaints of Petronius that fashionable Roman ladies exposed their charms much too immodestly by clothing them-



selves in the 'webs of woven wind,' as he called the muslins, imported from India, Pliny has it that India drained the Roman Empire annually to the extent of 55,000,000 sesterces (£ 486,979), [Mommesson gives the total £ 11,000,000, £ 6,000,000 for Arabia £ 5,000,000 for India] sending in return goods which sold at a hundred times their value in India. He also remarks in another place "this is the price we pay for our luxuries and our women." That the industrial arts had received attention and cultivation in early times in India is in evidence to the satisfaction of the most sceptical mind. The early Tamils divided arts into six groups: Ploughing (meaning thereby agriculture), Handicrafts, Painting, Commerce and Trade, the Learned arts, and lastly the Fine arts. Of these agriculture and commerce were regarded as of the first importance. Flourishing trade presupposes a volume of industry—the principal of which was weaving then as till recently. Cotton, silk and wool seem to have been the materials that were wrought into cloths. Among the woollens we find mention of manufactures from rat's wool which were regarded as particularly warm. There are thirty varieties of silks mentioned, each with a distinctive appellation of its own, as distinguished from the imported silks of China which had a separate name. The character of the cotton stuffs that were manufactured is indicated by the comparisons instituted between them and, 'sloughs of serpents' or vapour 'from milk;' and the general description of these as 'those fine textures the thread of which could not be followed even by the eye.' The chief exports from the country were these:—The produce of the soil like pepper, "great quantities of best pearl are likewise purchased here, ivory, silk in the web, spikenard from the Ganges, betel from the countries further to the east, transparent stones of all sorts, diamonds, rubies and tortoise shell from the golden Chersonese or from the islands off the coast of Limurike." This is all from the port of Muziris on the West coast. "There is a great resort of shipping to this port for pepper and betel; the merchants bring out a large quantity of spice, and their other imports are topazes, stibium, coral, flint, glass, brass, and lead, a small quantity of wine as profitable as at Barugaza, cinnabar, fine cloth, arsenic and wheat, not for sale but for the use of the crew. "That Pliny's complaint about the drain was neither imaginary nor hypersensitive is in evidence in a passage descriptive of Muziris in one of the ancient classics of Tamil literature. "Musiri to which come the well-rigged ships of the Yavanas, bringing gold and taking away spices in exchange."

Regarding the trade of the East coast, here follows a description of Puhār as a port. "Horses were brought from distant lands beyond the seas, pepper was brought in ships; gold and precious stones came from the northern mountains; sandal and aghil came from the mountains towards the west;

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pearl from the southern seas and coral from the eastern seas. The produce of the region watered by the Ganges; all that is grown on the banks of the Kavery; articles of food from Īlam (Ceylon) and the manufactures of Kālaham (Burma)" were brought there for sale. The products of particular importance received in the port of Tondi are aghil (a kind of black aromatic wood), fine silk stuff (from China), candy, sandal, scents, and camphor. All of these articles and salt were carried into the interior by means of wagons drawn by teams of oxen, slowly trudging along through town and village effecting enchanges with commodities for export. Tolls were paid on the way, and the journey from the coast up the plateau and back again occupied many months. A brisk and thriving commerce with the corresponding volume of internal trade argues peace; and the period to which the above description will apply must have been a period of general peace in the Peninsula. They did not forget in those days to maintain a regular customs establishment, the officials of which piled up the grain and stored up the things that could not immediately be measured and appraised, leaving them in the dockyards carefully sealed with the tiger signet of the king.

The Tamils built their own ships; and in the other crafts of the skilled artisan, they seem to have attained some proficiency, though they availed themselves of exports from distant places. In the building of the royal palace at Puhār, skilled artisans from Magadha, mechanics from Marādham (Maharatta), smiths from Avanti (Malva), carpenters from Yavana worked together with the artisans of the Tamil land. There is mention of a temple of the most beautiful workmanship, in the same city, built by the Gurjjaras. In the building of forts and in the providing of it with weapons and missiles both for offence and defence, the Tamils had attained to something like perfection. Twenty-four such forts are mentioned among the defences of Madura.

Passing on from the industrial to the literary social and religious condition of the South which we have so far been considering, we have again to with the three kingdoms, each with a capital city and a premier port. The Cholas had their capital at Uraiyr, with Puhār for an alternative capital and chief port; the Pandyas had their capital at Madura, with the port and premier viceroyalty at Korkai; the Cheras had their capital at Vanji, with the principal port and viceroyalty at Tonḍi. The Cholas had their premier viceroy, who was generally the heir-apparent, or at least a prince of the blood, at Kanchi. These towns and ports, therefore, bulk very largely in the literature and literary traditions of the period. The road from Kanchi to Trichinopalli

appears to have passed through Tirukkoilūr. From Trichy (i.e. Uraiyūr) to Madura it lay along the more arid parts of the Tanjore District to Koḍumbai in the state of Pudukkotta, and thence to Neḍunguḷam; from there, the road broke into three, and led up to Madura in three branches. From this last town a road kept close to the banks of the river Vaigai up to the Palnis; and from there up the hills and down again along the banks of the Periyār to Vanji, near its mouth. There seem to have been other roads besides; one at least from Vanji to the modern Karoor, and thence on to Tirukkoilūr. These roads were not safe in all parts alike, there being certain portions of them that passed through desert regions inhabited by wild tribes who were a cause of terror to the wayfarers, particularly those that had something to lose, notwithstanding the fact that robbery was punished with nothing short of impalement. Journeys appear to have been none the less frequent for purposes of pilgrimage, or in search of patronage for learning, or profits of commerce.

The rulers in those days held before them high ideals of government. Their absolute authority was limited by the 'five great assemblies,' as they were called, of ministers, priests, generals, heralds (spies), and ambassadors. There appears to have been a general permit for a learned Brahmin to speak his mind in any Durbar; and these often gave out their opinions most fearlessly. This privilege was similarly accorded to men of learning, as well. To give a few instances in illustration: A Brahmin pilgrim from the Chola country happened to be present at the Chera court, when the Chera king gave orders to his ministers to set his army in motion to avenge an insult that some Northern princes, he was told, had given him. The minister's remonstrance and the reluctance of the general were overruled. This Brahmin got up and pointed out in a speech that he had warred and warred the fifty years of his rule to safeguard his earthly interests, but had done very little to provide for himself in the life to come. Of course the expedition was countermanded; and the king began to make provision for the future. A young Pandya king of the next generation showed himself too enthusiastic for war, and it fell to the lot of one of the poets at court to wean him of this war craze. In a poem of 850 lines he conveyed the hint to the king; if language could be conceived to be the art of concealing thought, here is an instance par excellence. The next instance would take us to the court of the Malayamān of Tirukkoilūr, who neglected his wife; and a number of poets of the first rank interceded and restored him to her. The last that I would mention here is that of a poet, who enjoyed the patronage of successive Chola rulers. He found that at the end of a civil war the victorious Chola was about to put to death his vanquished cousin. The poet pointed out that the victory tarnished the good name of the Cholas, quite as much as a defeat; and

that he did not know whether to rejoice for the victorious Chola or weep for the vanquished one. The intercession was certainly effective. These illustrations shew in addition the respect that learning commanded. I shall permit myself one more illustration to shew this respect. The warlike Pandya referred to already, came to the throne young. He had immediately to go to war against a combination of his two neighbours, and his court were naturally anxious as to the result. The young prince in a poem, full of poetical grace, assured them that he would return victorious; and that if he should fail, the poets of his court, including Mānguḍi Marudan, may cease to attend. The ideal of justice set before them in those days was something unattainable. They strove their utmost to attain to the sublimity of their ideal; and a king was judged good or bad upon the degree of success he achieved in this particular branch of his duties. "Oh the king! he is to blame if the rains fail; he is to blame if women go astray. What is there in a king's estate, except perpetual anxiety, that people should envy the position of a king for!" Learning went in search of patronage. There must have been very considerable output of literature. It was perhaps to check the growth of the weed of learning that a body of censors called the Śāṅgam was instituted. It is a body of works that received the imprimatur of this learned body that has been the source of all this information regarding this period. This is not the place to enter into the origin of Tamil literature; or of its independence or otherwise; or of its connexion with the literature of Sanskrit. But I might remark, in passing, that Tamil literature (as distinct from language,) cannot lay claim to that independence that its votaries would demand for it with more zeal than argument. Learning seems to have been somewhat widespread and much sought after. Women seem to have had their share of learning, as the number of women poets would indicate. All this learning was not confined to the Brihman either; although he was the sole custodian of the "Northern Lore."

In matters religious there was a happy confusion. Jains, Buddhists, Brahmins, Saivites, Vaishnavites, and people of other persuasions, both major and minor, all lived together and at peace with each other. "There were splendid temples in the city dedicated to the worship of the celestial tree Kalpaka, the celestial elephant Airāvatha, Vajrāyutha (the thunderbolt of Indra), Baladeva, Sūrya Chandra, Siva Subrahmaniya, Sātavāhana of Nigrantha, Kāma (God of love), and Yama (God of death). There were seven *viharas* reputed to have been built by Indra, the king of the gods in which dwelt no less than 300 monks (Buddhistic). The temple of Yama was outside the walls of the town, in the burial ground in the city of Puhār, the capital of the Cholas. The three rival systems of the Brahmins, the Jains an

the Buddhists flourished together, each with its own clientele unhampered by the others in the prosecution of its own holy rights. The Brahman was perhaps regarded as an inconvenience by some, but the general feeling appears to have been that he was indispensable to the prosperity of the state. A devout Buddhist and an ascetic Jain prince speak of him with great respect. He was the custodian of the hidden lore; he was the guardian of the sacred fire, the source of material prosperity to the state; he was the person who performed the sacrifices according to the difficult orthodox rights, and brought timely rain. These are the terms in which these heterodox writers refer to him. He had a function in society; and he discharged it faithfully. The whole attitude both of the orthodox and the heterodox in matters of religion was pity for the ignorance of the other; but nothing more bitter, as Max Muller very well pointed out. Animism seems to have played an important part in the religious system of those days. There was a temple consecrated to the 'Chaste Lady' as she was called, who died in consequence of the murder of her husband. There are images of hers preserved in temples up to the present times, as some of the images depicted in illustration of the ancient art of Ceylon are of this deified woman according to Dr. A. K. Kumarasami. Sati was in vogue; but under well recognized limitations. This was permitted only to women who had no natural guardians to fall back upon, nor had children to bring up. That it was not uncommon for young women to return to their parents widowed, is vouched for by a comparison that a poet institutes between the approach of darkness and the return of the widowed young woman whose husband had lately fallen in war. Annual festivals were celebrated with great éclat, and one of the grandest was that to Indra celebrated at Puhār.

Having so far made an attempt to string the facts that I was able to glean from a vast body of literature that has only become available during the last few years, I now proceed to what is my postscript, which in the orthodox style ought to have been a preface. In the course of the hearing of the paper it must have suggested itself to many of my hearers to ask the question where I managed to get all this from, and what their credentials were to command belief. A very natural question; and one that ought certainly to be answered. My sources have been three: classical writers; Indian literature, Tamil and Sanskrit; and the Ceylonese chronicle. Of the first group, Strabo wrote in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, Pliny published his geography in 77 A.D., the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea was written in the first century A. D., Ptolemy wrote his geography about 150 A.D., the Pentingerian Tables were composed in 222 A.D. There were other writers who wrote later; and we are not concerned with them directly. I would draw attention to three points, taken from the works of classical writers.

Pliny remarks "At the present day voyages are made to India every year ; and companies of archers are carried on board because the Indian seas are infested by pirates. "Later on he has it." IT (Muziris) is not a desirable place of call, pirates being in the neighbourhood, who occupy a place called Nitrias ; and besides, it is not well supplied with wares for traffic. "This was before 77 A.D. Ptolemy regarded this port Maziris an emporium ; and places south of Bakarai, the country of Aioi. The Peutingerian Tables state it clearly that two Roman cohorts were maintained in the same town for the protection of Roman commerce.

Mr. Sewell, who made an elaborate study of the Roman coins found in India, considers that the coin-finds lead to the following conclusions :—

(1) There was hardly any commerce between Rome and India during the Consulate.

(2) With Augustus began an intercourse which, enabling the Romans to obtain oriental luxuries during the early days of the empire, culminated about the time of Nero, who died A.D. 68.

(3) From this time forward the trade declined till the date of Caracalla, A.D. 217.

(4) From the date of Caracalla it almost entirely ceased.

(5) It revived again though slightly, under the Byzantine Emperors.

He also infers that the trade under the early emperors was in luxuries ; under the later, in industrial products, and under the Byzantines the commerce was with the S.-W. coast only, and not with the interior. He differs from those who find an explanation of this fluctuation in the political and social condition of India itself, and the facilities or their absence for navigating the seas ; and opines that the cause is to be sought for in the political and social condition of Rome.

If, from an examination of the second class of my sources of information alone, we find that there was a period when South India was under great rulers who gave the country peace and thus provided the indispensable security for commerce, if this period could be shown to correspond to that of the Roman Empire from Augustus to Caracalla, and if after this period, we find the country in a condition of political flux, we might still find one at least of the most potent causes of this commercial decline in the internal condition of India itself, in all historical conscience. Pliny and Ptolemy do not mention



the Roman cohorts at Muziris as do the Peutingerian Tables. The first exploit of the Red Chera is the destruction of the Kadambu tree on the sea coast. Another compliment that the poets never miss an opportunity of bestowing upon this patron is that the Chera fleet sailed on the waters of that littoral with a sense of dominion and security. The Kadambu mentioned above is explained as a tree of extraordinary power which could not be cut down by ordinary man. I rather think from the context that it has reference to a piratical rendezvous. If this view be correct, the advent of the said Chera brought along with it security. This would be in conformity with Ptolemy's reference to Aay. This was one of the seven chieftains known to literature as "the last seven patrons." From the body of works known to Tamil scholars as Śāngam works their contemporaneity could easily be established. I have examined this question elsewhere (in my Augustan Age of Tamil Literature) and find the name Āay quite a distinctive name of an individual, and not that of a family. Then Āay must have been the contemporary or a little older than Ptolemy, and the age of Ptolemy would practically be the age of the Red Chera, and the Chera ascendancy. This conclusion only confirms what has been arrived at independently of this class of evidence. Gajabahu of Ceylon who visited the Red Chera almost at the end of his reign, ruled according to the Ceylonese chronicle from 113 to 135 A. D. Allowing for the difference between the Ceylonese date of the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha and that arrived at by modern scholars as Dr. Fleet, viz 60 years, the date for Gajabahu would be 173 to 195 A.D. The Chera ascendancy then would cover the latter two-thirds of the second century A.D. Here has to be brought in the Paisachi work Brihat Kathā. Among the temples mentioned as having been found at Puhār was one dedicated to Śatavāhana. This personage was the ruler in whose court flourished the minister Guṇāḍya, who was the author of this stupendous work which stands at the root of all romantic literature in India, whether in Sanskrit or vernacular. A translation of this work it is that set the fashion in Tamil for the composition of the romantic epics. The age of the original is still matter under investigation. The latest authority on the question is the Dutch scholar Speyer, who would place it in the third century A.D. at the earliest—a date clearly impossible according to our line of enquiry. I shall not say more about it here now; but would only remark that one of the works clearly based upon this, has to be referred to a period anterior to the astronomer, Varāhamitira 533 A.D. This work, Maṇimekhala, refers to the asterism under which the Buddha was born as the 14th; which according to the modern computation, following Varāhamihira, ought to be the 17th. The Ceylon chronicle also deserves to be investigated more carefully. So far investigations from different points of view only appear to confirm its chronology, except for the correction made above.

The date of the death of Caracalla corresponds closely to the disappearance of the Śatavahanas of the Dekhan. According to the latest opinion the power of the Kushanas also vanish about the same period. In South India likewise the Pandya ascendancy passes into darkness. The century following is one of the dark spots in Indian history, till the rise of the Guptas in the North; that of the Chalukyas in the Dekhan, and the Pallavas in the South. More research into Tamil literature and the Ceylon Mahāvamsā would yield results worth the trouble perhaps, failing coins and other auxiliaries, though there may be something to be gained by a careful study of the traditions that grew up later on.

As the object of this paper has been merely to indicate in general terms the trend of the history of South India in particular, I have omitted many details and have had to leave the subject, in many respects, incomplete; but I hope I have indicated the general trend of that history clearly enough to stimulate enquiry.

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## THE EVIL EYE.

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*(A Lecture delivered at the December Meeting of the Mythic Society.)*

BY MAJOR H. R. BROWN, I.M.S.

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The Evil Eye, or the power of "fascinating" or "bewitching" has for ages been recognized and dreaded in all parts of the world. The belief in this power was an accepted article of faith amongst primitive and uncivilized people; but as knowledge and education increased and progressed, the belief declined amongst cultured peoples, and it is now usually looked upon by them as a superstition\* belonging to the past. Though this view is the usual one amongst more advanced people, yet the belief in this evil power still survives and is much dreaded by those who are in a less advanced state of knowledge and civilization.

In Southern India what is known as "BAD NUZZER" or the "evil look," amongst Mohammedans; and "KUN DRISHTI" or "eye casting,"

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\* In parts of Italy a method of averting the evil eye is as follows:—When a hailstorm is approaching, a gun is loaded with projectiles including candles which have been blessed, and is then discharged; the hailstorms are dispersed, and the peasant believes that the consecrated candle was the cause. This idea was held as early as the time of Caligula, who used a machine for "throwing stones at the clouds." *Ed.*

amongst Hindus, is a fruitful source of anxiety and trouble to them. The evil is ever present, ever active, and its dread power may be experienced at any time. Though the eye is not the only channel, by which the evil can be communicated, the mind, bodily presence, touch, and the tongue or speech being also capable of transmitting it; yet the eye is considered to be the most deadly, and thus the term "Evil Eye" is used to embrace the whole subject. The feeling of envy, which is considered to be one of the most depraved and vilest of the affections of the mind, is held to be the *fons et origo* of the malignant power. Bacon in his Essay on Envy, says: "There are none of the affections which have been noted to fascinate or to bewitch but love and envy: they both have vehement wishes, they frame themselves readily into imaginations and suggestions, and they come easily into the eye, especially upon the presence of those objects which are the points that conduce to fascination, if any such then be. We see likewise the Scripture calleth envy an Evil Eye."

The eye has at all times been considered pre-eminently the organ through which the emotions can be expressed. Such emotions as love, hate and fear produce changes in the expression which are readily recognized and interpreted. Such everyday expressions as the "glare of hate," the "soft and melting gaze" of love, and the "steely look" of anger, clearly how important a part the eye plays in the expression of the emotions, and how it is accepted to be the medium through which the soul or mind of man is revealed to his fellow creatures.

The eye then, being the organ through which the hidden passions, desires and emotions of human nature are projected into the visible world of the senses; its powers came to be considered as great as superstitious, that is to say, ignorant man imagined them to be. Such a man when subjected to a powerful gaze was disturbed and agitated, and so unable to judge rightly as to the cause of his discomfort, and attributed to another the results for which he was himself chiefly responsible. So the error lay not in the recognition of the eye as an organ of expression, but in the explanation of the effect. Any untoward result following the uncomfortable experience and for which no ready explanation could be found, was not unnaturally attributed to the effects of the gaze, and thus the eye came to be considered the centre of a malignant influence. Primitive man being unable to give a rational or scientific explanation of the simplest natural phenomenon, it is hardly to be wondered at that he became still more befogged when confronted with anything of a psychological nature, and he naturally was led to endow the eye with supernatural powers. It may therefore be said that this belief in the power of the Evil Eye is a natural or instinctive one.

This is put forward as a possible explanation of the manner in which the belief took its origin.

The earliest human records available show that this belief in power of the eye was well established. In the very beginning of Egyptian mythology, PTAH, the opener, the father of gods and men, is said to have brought forth all the other gods from his eye, and men from his mouth. The inference being that those creations emanating from the eye were the more powerful. The oldest Egyptian monuments give evidence that the belief in, and the dread of, the Evil Eye was most powerful, and elaborate measures were taken to protect both the living and the dead against it.

The Scriptures bear ample testimony to the existence of the belief, and many passages refer explicitly to it; e.g. Proverbs XXIII. 6: "Eat thou not the bread of him who hath the evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats." Again Proverbs XXVIII. 22: "He that hasteneth to be rich hath an evil eye." Matthew XX. 15. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own—Is thine eye evil because I am good." Mark VII. 22. "Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." There are many other passages referring to this, but sufficient have been quoted to show that the belief in the evil eye was well recognized. The Koran also contains references to this belief.

Amongst the ancient Greeks, who obtained many of their beliefs and customs from Egypt, the belief was universal, and they had a special word for this so called supernatural power—"BASKANIOS," from which the Latin word "FASCINATIO" is derived. This power is constantly referred to in their writings, and many and various methods are described to avert the influence. The Greek word "BASKANIOS" has been traced back by some writers to the Chaldean.

Ancient Indian writings contain frequent allusions to the Evil Eye, and the Atharva Veda contains many charms against it. Various amulets are described—the wood of the TILAKA tree was supposed to ward off witchcraft. Lead was also used as a charm against diseases and sorcery. An amulet composed of three threads—note the mystic number—one of gold, one of silver, and one of iron insured general protection. In Book II. the following address to an amulet is given:—

- "Power art thou, give me power—All hail!
- "Might art thou, give me might—All hail!
- "Strength art thou, give me strength—All hail!
- "Life art thou, give me life—All hail!
- "Ear art thou, give me hearing—All hail!
- "Shield art thou, shield me well—All hail!"

In Book XIX. There is a special invocation of the Jangida plant in which witchcraft, malignity, injuries to cattle etc., are specifically mentioned. Coming to more recent times, the belief in the power of the Evil Eye was rife in Europe during the Middle Ages. Special treatises on the subject were written in the 17th Century by Delrio and Frommand, the latter author wrote most exhaustively on the subject. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, "Eye-biting" witches were executed in Ireland for causing disease amongst cattle. The belief still exists in most European countries, Italy, Spain and Portugal being those in which it is most common.

In India at the present day the belief is very widespread amongst the uneducated classes, and "Mantra Vidians" as the Hindu professors in the art of magic are called and "Amil" or "Mushayaq" amongst the Mohammedans, can be met with in most places.

From what has been said, it will be seen how widespread the belief in the power of the Evil Eye has been, and how even in these days of enlightenment it still persists. One writer on the subject remarks, "it is not improbable that if the matter were still more profoundly investigated, it would be found that every nation that exists or has existed, with anything like a developed system of superstition, believes or has believed in the reality of fascination in some form or other."

An individual who possesses the Evil Eye is supposed to be capable of "projecting" or "shooting out" the power of evil on animate and inanimate objects. The power may be used consciously or unconsciously and hence its division into two forms:—

1. The Moral.
2. The Natural.

This classification was recognized in ancient times and is still accepted.

**The Moral kind** is that exercised by the will. This was specially legislated for by the Romans, and the laws in force against it included all those who practised the Black Art and incantations.

**The Natural kind** is much more terrible than the moral, and is exerted by those who *naturally* possess the Evil Eye, e.g. those who are born with the power, or those who are possessed by an evil demon, who uses his vehicle as a means through which he can exercise his devilish powers. The possessors of this form may be quite unconscious of their terrible power, and their eyes continually and quite involuntarily shoot out "pernicious rays" which are believed to act in a malignant manner on their unfortunate victims. In India, at all events in Southern India, this second form is the one which is

more generally recognized. It is believed that in the vast majority of instances the power is born with an individual. One idea is that should a child be born at, what is considered by the astrologers, an unlucky hour, it is possessed of the Evil Eye. In this latter case, though in after-life the power is constantly in action, it is increased and becomes more powerful during the unlucky hour. A knowledge therefore of the hour at which the supposed fascinator was born is most important to the maker of charms. Armed with this information he can consult his books and from them the correct formula can be made out, or the proper ceremony performed and the sufferer relieved of the evil influence.

As a rule the fascinator presents no outward and visible sign by which he can be recognized. Still there are signs which are supposed by some to be more or less diagnostic. The possession of a double pupil in one or both eyes, or a squint, makes its possessor an object of suspicion. People with odd eyes, i.e. eyes of different colours, are also thought to possess the evil power. Amongst the Arabs grey eyes are synonymous with envy or evil eye; but in this part of India amongst Mohammedans who are versed in the subject, such persons are held to have occult powers of vision, but are not considered to have any evil powers. Mention has already been made of the tongue or speech being a means by which the evil can be transmitted, *apropos* of this, there is a belief amongst Mohammedan "Mushayaqs," that persons who have patches of black pigment on their tongues are endowed with the power of fascination. Women are thought to more commonly possess the power of witching or fascinating than men; and old women are particularly dreaded.

Even the Gods themselves are not immune from the effects of this mysterious and terrible influence, nor do they refrain from using it on one another or on human beings and their possessions, should their envy be excited from any cause, such as success or happiness. The fear of exciting the envy of the Gods is an old and well known superstition.

This power, terrible enough when used unconsciously, becomes infinitely more deadly when used under the influence of envy or anger. Beckford in his book, "The History of the Caliph Vathek" says that one of the eyes of the Caliph was so terrible in anger that "those died who ventured to look thereon" and had he given way to his wrath he would have depopulated his whole dominion. Heliodorus says: "When any one looks at what is excellent with envy fills the surrounding atmosphere with a pernicious quality and transmits his own envenomed exhalations into whatever is nearest to him."

Young animals, human and otherwise; women, especially when young, beautiful or pregnant, are believed to be peculiarly susceptible to the evil.

The baleful eye can blast trees and crops\* ; houses in course of construction fall ; and any person in the enjoyment of special happiness or good fortune is in great danger because of the feeling of envy he excites in the mind of the fascinator.

Self praise, or praise of one's possession either by oneself or by others, should be avoided for the same reason. Under such circumstances certain acts are performed, such as making a manual gesture to represent some protective object, or some potent word or phrase is uttered to counteract the evil.

The power of fascination or the evil eye has been described by DELRIO, a monk of Louvain, who wrote a treatise on magic in the 17th Century, as "A power derived from a pact with the devil, who, when the so-called fascinator looks at another with an evil intent, or praises, by means known to himself, infects with evil the person at whom he looks." He also says that fascination may be received by the touch. Mr. Thurston in his book "Ethnographic notes in Southern India" says that in Malabar it is believed that, "It is not the eye alone that commits the mischief, but also the mind and tongue. Man is said to do good and evil through the mind, word and deed, i.e. *mansa*, *vacha*, and *karmana*." This belief has been verified in the course of conversation on this subject with a Brahmin in Bangalore, so that it seems to be wide spread. From what has been said, it appears that the power of fascination in many of its aspects resembles hypnotism ; and it is an undoubted fact that some persons are able to exert a powerful influence over others. In the case of hypnotism, it is admitted now-a-days that the subject must be either willing to be influenced, or from a belief in the power of the operator, his mind is in a receptive condition and the operator is able to influence him by word, look, and touch.

It being believed that this power of fascinating or bewitching is peculiar to certain individuals who can use it at will to the detriment of others, it is not difficult to realize how the witch or wizard became an object of fear and aversion. Such persons were believed to have other occult powers in addition to their power of "witching." One of these was the power of assuming at will the shape of an animal. The usual forms assumed being those of the cat, hare, or wolf. We are all familiar with the "were-wolf" and the black cat in this connexion. These animals were therefore looked upon as being uncanny, and this seems to be a very reasonable explanation of the origin of the idea that it is unlucky to meet one of these animals.

\* In parts of Italy hail so detrimental to crops is believed to be caused by persons possessing the evil eye. The peasants look upon hail as either the direct work of Satan or as the vengeance of God. They are in the habit of raising a wooden cross, about five feet high, in the cornfields upon St. Peter's or else Holy Cross day; upon this are twined sprigs of olive, blessed, the one on Palm Sunday, and the other on St. Peter's day. These are also supposed to avert thunderstorms.—Ed.



Mr. Thurston in his book "Ethnographic notes in Southern India," gives an account of certain necromancers in Malabar, known as Odiyans who are able to transform themselves into animals in order to carry out their nefarious designs. The usual form assumed is either that of a bullock or a cat, this varies according to circumstances. Having assumed this form, the wizard approaches the hut or house of his victim, and by means of his spells compels the person to come out to him, he then is able to work his wicked will at his ease. The result is usually fatal to the victim. So it will be seen that the subject of the Evil Eye or the power of bewitching or fascinating, which is the peculiar power of the witch or wizard, is intimately connected with charms, spells, enchantments and incantations, all of which are included under the general title of Magic. The belief in the power of transformation still survives amongst us in the familiar Nursery tale, in which the witch or wizard is able at will to assume the form of an animal in order to gain his or her ends. All will readily call to mind the wolf in the story of Little Red Riding Hood. In India, in the jungles, it is quite a common belief that certain tigers which are abnormally cunning and mischievous, are wizards or witches, who assume the form of a tiger so as to wreak their vengeance on the inhabitants of the part of the country they frequent.

The glance or gaze of a fascinator is held to be capable of causing the death of the fascinated person. It may instead of being fatal produce illness or simply uncomfortable feelings. From conversations held with both Hindu and Mohammedan professors of magic in Bangalore it has been gathered that the belief is general here, that the effects are rarely fatal. They agree in the main as to the symptoms produced. These are a general feeling of malaise, languor, loss of appetite, loss of interest in life and a general wasting of the body. The body is racked with flying pains; the mind loses its vigour and the victim suffers from nervousness, loss of sleep and frequent twitching of the limbs both when awake and asleep. Added to these there may be perversion of taste, so that food and drink become nauseous. The sense of smell may also be perverted, and the wretched victim is constantly distressed by being conscious of evil odours when none really exist. As has already been mentioned, animals, crops and houses can be damaged and destroyed by the evil glance. These animate and inanimate objects are in the opinion of the "mantra-vadis" much more dangerously affected than human beings, and they agree that death or destruction can be suffered by them.

Important people, such as kings, statesmen, etc., who by virtue of their position are exposed to the gaze of crowds, are considered to be specially liable to the danger of fascination because of the envy they excite. Dubois in his book "Hindu Manners and Customs in Southern India," describes how



such persons have on their return from any public function to undergo a ceremony known as *ĀRATHI*, which removes the evil influence. He also says that this ceremony is performed for the temple gods after the worship for the day is over; and especially after the God has been carried in procession and exposed to the gaze of the multitude. This ceremony which consists of waving certain substances supposed to have prophylactic powers, before the affected person, is a very commonly performed one. A fuller description of it will be given later on when the various methods used for averting and counteracting the mischief are described.

The effect of the power of fascination being so destructive and mischievous, means had to be found to prevent or counteract it. The commonest of these is that known as the Amulet or Talisman. An Amulet is defined in the *New Century Dictionary* as "some object superstitiously worn as a remedy for, or a preservative against, disease, bad luck, accidents and witchcraft, and may consist of certain stones or plants or bits of metal, parchment or paper with or without mystic characters or words. They are suspended from the neck or affixed to some part of the body—Synonym—Talisman. An Amulet is supposed to exert a constant protective power warding off evil."

A Talisman is held to produce under special conditions desired results for the owner. It is also supposed to avert evil and thus serves a double purpose and is defined as "a supposed charm consisting of a magical figure engraved under certain superstitious observances of the configuration of the heavens; the seal, figure character or image of a heavenly sign, constellation or planet engraved on a sympathetic stone, or on a metal corresponding to a star, in order to receive its influence. The word is also used in a wider sense as an equivalent to Amulet." The exact meaning of these two words—Amulet and Talisman—has been dwelt on at some length as a clear understanding of their meaning is necessary so as to make it clear how certain objects and formulæ have come to be regarded as prophylactics against the power of the Evil Eye. A form of Amulet known as a "Phylactery" is in common use. This consists of a small case made of either leather or metal—usually gold or silver—which contains a slip of parchment or paper bearing special texts from the sacred writings or cabalistic figures. The phylactery is worn suspended round the neck or bound round the left arm near the region of the heart.

Before going on to a description of the various kinds of amulets used, it may be of interest to trace how the amulet came to be used and how the belief in its efficacy arose. Primitive man unable to understand the workings of the great forces of nature, though he clearly realized that he owed

his very existence to them, endowed them with human attributes, or in other words personified and deified them, and looked upon them with great awe and reverence. He regarded these powers as either beneficent or maleficent according as they affected him, and he worshipped and propitiated them. Gradually, all objects, in the visible world around him, were regarded by him as being possessed of some mysterious power by which he was either beneficially and evilly affected. Trees, streams, rocks, etc., had all their own particular spirits. To all these—the great forces of nature and the spirits of the objects surrounding him—propitiatory offerings had to be made. Sacrifices were made to please the spirits or deities, and certain animals were commonly sacrificed to particular gods or spirits and became inseparably associated with them; and from this constant association with the deity came to participate in the nature of the god and so became sacred to the God. So also trees, streams, etc., which were all the abode of certain spirits became intimately associated with these beings. Thus these particular animals, trees, plants, stones, etc., in course of time became the symbols of the deities they were associated with; and as the primitive intelligence was not capable of fine discrimination, the symbol came to be regarded as the same thing as the object symbolized; to have equal powers with it and to receive the same worship and reverence. As the gods and spirits were thought to be able to protect their worshippers from evil, so their symbols were regarded as having equal power, and the symbol when carried about by an individual conferred on him the same measure of safety and protection as the presence of the god itself. As an example of the symbol serving for the god or power, the goddess of Truth can be symbolized by either a pair of scales or the sword of justice. Vishnu, the protector, is symbolized by either the chank or chakram. From the constant use of symbols as reminders of the worship due to the beings symbolized it is not difficult to see how the belief in the efficacy of the symbol led to its use as an amulet.

Amulets are usually worn on the person, but their use has been extended and they are used not only on the person, but are placed in some prominent position in houses and fields so as to readily attract the attention of the fascinator.

Elworthy in his book on this subject, says: "We must ever bear in mind that it was, and continues to be, believed that the first glance of the Evil Eye was the most fatal, and therefore it was of the utmost importance that any object intended to protect against its influence should be such as should attract the first or fatal stroke; for it was just as firmly held, that whatever diverted it for the moment from the person or animal liable to injury,

absorbed and so destroyed its effect. Anything, therefore, calculated to excite the curiosity, the mirth, or in any way to attract the attention of the beholder, was considered to be the most effectual. There were three methods generally accepted for averting fascination, whether it were of look, voice, touch or bodily presence of the fascinator. These were, by exciting laughter or curiosity; by demonstration of good fortune so as to excite envy in the beholder and so as to draw his evil glance upon the object displayed; and by doing something painfully disagreeable to cause him an unpleasant feeling of dread lest he, the fascinator, should be compelled to do likewise." He goes on to say, "Plutarch in a remarkable passage declares that the objects that are fixed up to ward off witchcraft or fascination, derive their efficacy from the fact that they act through the strangeness and ridiculousness of their forms, which fix the mischief working eye upon themselves." From this it will be seen that the amulet may take many forms, and the idea of exciting mirth or curiosity in the mind of the fascinator has led to the use of various grotesque figures as charms. Those known as "Grylli" from the Italian word "Grillo" a grasshopper, or a caprice or fancy, were very commonly used. Ancient genius engraved with such figures as men with animals heads, etc., hideous faces, etc., are common amongst museum collections in Europe, and were extensively used in the time of the Greeks and even earlier. It is a well-known fact that few things excite the curiosity so much as anything obscene or indecent, and thus such objects were powerful protectors. Hence the common use of the phallus as a charm. This will also explain the reason of the indecent carvings so often seen on temple cars and in temples themselves in India. As far as can be ascertained the phallus is not used commonly in India as a prophylactic against the Evil Eye; but the lingam and the yoni-lingam are common objects. The phallus as a charm was used in the most ancient times. In ancient Egypt, it was widely used; bronze phallic amulets have been found in the Etruscan tombs, in Pompeii this object is one of the commonest seen. Passing from this to the second means used to avert the Evil Eye, viz., exciting envy in the mind of the fascinator by drawing his gaze to some object, the practice of wearing some bright ornament in a prominent position may be mentioned; and lastly the practice of doing something painfully disagreeable so as to cause the fascinator an unpleasant feeling is a not uncommon procedure. Certain gestures are made which are insulting or indecent. One well-known manual gesture, which is described as "the closed fist with the thumb protruding between the index and middle fingers", was commonly used, and hands made of metal in this position were largely used as amulets. To this day this gesture used is in India, but great difficulty has been experienced in getting any sort of explanation of its meaning. That it is insulting and

obscene is admitted, but the exact meaning has not been elicited. Mischievous boys are said to use it as an insulting gesture, so it is evident that this particular gesture is known. The hand in this position is still used as an amulet in Europe, and in Italy it is commonly used and is then known as the "Mano Fica".

In addition to the already described means of protection which are openly displayed, other amulets are worn concealed on the person, and owe their power not to the attraction of the direct glance, but to their being invocations of the protective deity or power. These are written charms and may consist of verses or texts from sacred writings, which are believed to have special powers; or to cabalistic writings and magical formulae which are also held to be effective.

The various amulets used as a protection against the Evil Eye may now be discussed more particularly. Before proceeding to do this it may be as well as to deal briefly with the subject of Sympathetic Magic, which has a distinct bearing on this subject. Tylor in his work "Primitive Culture" says: "One of the principles of this is that any effect may be produced by imitating it". This is the homeopathic idea that "like cures or causes like," and this notion is largely responsible for many of the means used to avert the evil effects of fascination. In Magic, a very usual means of injuring an enemy is to make a small image of the person to be injured; certain ceremonies are performed, spells uttered and pins or thorns are driven into the image. Whatever damage is done to the image, it is supposed that the person it represents suffers in a like way, and if the damage is sufficient, the person dies. This method is used in India. The image, here, is taken after the proper ceremonies have been performed, and buried at midnight at the junction of four cross roads, or in a damp place. As the image rots so the person represented is supposed to pine away and die. Elworthy quoting from CESNOLA'S book "Cyprus" says: "Arab amulets at the present day bear the figure of the thing against which they exert their virtue, and all oriental practices in this line come down from immemorial antiquity". As an example of an object used as an amulet involving the idea of Sympathetic Magic, the eye may be instanced. The eye is frequently found on ancient amulets either alone or as a central object, surrounded in compound amulets, by other symbols considered to be protective. It is not much used now-a-days. In China, it is a common object on the bows of junks, and is no doubt used as a protective against evil. A Chinaman who was questioned as to the reason why the boats had eyes painted on their bows, naively remarked "No have eye no can see". A necklace has been procured in Bangalore made up of beads which have markings on them distinctly resembling eyes, and there is a

similar one in the local museum amongst the ornaments worn by women of the KORACHA caste. These people are a wandering tribe whose women practice fortune telling. "Mr. H. V. Nanjundayya in his pamphlet on the KORACHA caste, says: "Korama or Koracha" (by both of which names this caste is known) both seem to be derived from the word "KURU" meaning to divine or prognosticate, and are applied to the caste on account of their profession of fortune telling, which their women practise". On enquiries being made about the use of the beads mentioned above, it was at once stated without any prompting, that they were a protection against "DRISHTI". So it seems clear that though not generally used the "eye" is still employed in India as an amulet. Mr. Thurston gives an illustration in Plate XXI of his book "Ethnographic Notes in Southern India" of an eye used as a votive offering, but no other mention is made in his book or in others have been consulted of the use of the eye as an amulet.

The use of hideous and terrifying faces and marks as protective is a very widespread one. On the outside of most temples in India and on temple cars these objects may be seen, and their use is undoubtedly to catch and avert the evil looks of the envious and ill disposed. On the front of a small temple in Cavalry Road in Bangalore—the temple is one devoted to Subramoney are at least four hideous faces which at once attract the attention. The use of the Medusa Head, or Gorgon, in this way was well established in ancient Greece. This head with its split protruding tongue, hideous features, huge tusks, and serpent entwined hair bears a close resemblance to Bhawani in India; and it has been suggested that the Grecian myth had its origin in India. Hideous masks have been used all over the world for their supposed protective powers against the envious or evil look. Specimens have been collected from places as far apart as Peru, Greece and Tahiti. This idea of exciting fear in the breast of the fascinator has given rise to other methods. One of these used in India is, to say suddenly to a suspected fascinator: "Be careful, there is a snake at your feet". Hideous faces carved in stone or on metal are worn round the neck in India, but though these have been seen it has not been possible to persuade the owners to part with them. A promise of one was made a few days ago, but the mask has not yet been received. In Classical times actors used to cover their faces with a mask, and Elworthy suggests that this was probably due to their fear lest they might be struck by the envious glance of some person in the audience. Apropos of hiding the face to avoid the Evil Eye, may it not be that the custom in India of females hiding their faces behind the end of the sari when looked at by strangers is due partly to fear of this power? In Malabar when a new house is being built, a hideous doll-like creature, of

some sort, is put in a prominent position on the walls to protect the building from envious looks. At the Dasserah festival in Bangalore this year two enormous, grotesque and hideous figures—male and female—made of wicker work preceded one of the cars bearing a god. Inside each figure was a man who danced making these absurd constructions sway and wheel about in a highly amusing manner. May it not be that these figures by exciting either fear or amusement amongst the crowd are believed to act as protectives to the god and avert the Evil Eye from him? The use of devices on shields is assumed by Elworthy to have originated from the use of a hideous face—originally that of the Medusa—on the shield to catch the malignant glance of an enemy and thus protect its user from at least one danger.

Other objects of striking appearance are used on houses and fields. In Malabar a very common figure used is that of a monkey with pendulous testes, or that of a woman with very protuberant breasts. In the fields a pot painted black or white with large black or white spots on it is generally used all over Southern India to protect crops, and this may be seen in many of the vegetable gardens round Bangalore. Indecent figures are also used in some parts. Mr. Thurston mentions "Monstrous Priapi made in straw with painted clay pots for heads." Similar objects have been seen from the Railway on the journey to Mettapaliyam. In Madras human figures are also placed on buildings when they are under construction, and this fact is also mentioned in Mr. Thurston's book.

The hand, representations of which made in metal or other materials, has from the earliest time been used as an amulet against the Evil Eye, and has been regarded as a very powerful protective. The origin of this belief seems to be due to the idea involved in Sympathetic Magic. Touch, more especially intentional touching with the hands, being one way and a very powerful one too, by which the fascinator can exert his power, the hand may have in this way come to be regarded as a protective, it being the figure of the thing against which it exerts its virtue. Again, the hand is the symbol of power and is used as the symbol of the "all protecting power". The hand as an amulet was represented in various positions; open with the fingers all extended; in the shape of the "Mano Fica" already described; and as what is known as the "Mano Cornuta". This last is a gesture very commonly used in Italy against the Evil Eye. The hand in this position has the middle and ring fingers flexed on the palm with the index and little fingers extended. It represents a pair of horns. Horns are held to be powerful amulets against fascination, and, in default of having the horns themselves, this sign is held to quite able to take their place. There is another position in which the hand is

held, the attitude of Sacerdotal benediction. Here the thumb, index and middle fingers are extended, the ring and little fingers being flexed on the palm, and the hand is held upright. Amulets have been made in all these attitudes and are used to this day. Elworthy illustrates some beautiful examples of the last described position of the hand. He calls it the "Mano Pantea". These hands are covered with carvings of other protectives and form most excellent examples of compound amulets. This form of amulet is little, if at all, used in India. The only traces found of it are the imprints of open hands, very often five in number, on the walls and on the side of door-ways. These have been explained by some Indians questioned, as being put up to ward off the Evil Eye; others again say they are not used except by Mohammedan wrestlers as a directing sign to their gymnasia; others say the sign is used by Mohammedan wrestlers in commemoration of their Patron Saint Maula Ali, the son-in-law of the prophet, who was a great wrestler. Mr. Thurston says that amongst the MADIGAS, a sheep or goat is sacrificed to the marriage pots during the marriage ceremony. The sacrificer dips his hands in the blood of the animal and makes an imprint of them on the wall near the door leading to the room where the pots are kept. This is done to avert the Evil Eye.

The open hand has been seen on the clothing of a mendicant in Bangalore. These hands made in red cloth were sewn on his coat, one on each breast and one between the shoulders. Unfortunately at the time he was seen there was no opportunity of speaking to him, and afterward's when search was made for him he was not to be found. Hands made of bone are reported to be worn suspended round the neck by certain people, said to be Lambanis. These people were seen by a servant in the vicinity of Saklaspur in the Hassan District, but it was not possible at the time to talk to the people, so no information is available as to what these ornaments or charms represent.

The manual gestures already described, except the *mano Fica*, as well as many others, are constantly seen on carvings and statues of Indian Gods and Goddesses, and evidently are meant to convey some meaning. Perhaps the original significance of these gestures has been lost sight of. Numerous people have been questioned as to whether these gestures have any importance, but beyond being told that they are meant to convey ordinary everyday significance associated with such attitudes no information has been obtained.

The open hand is used on forts in Southern India, but what the exact significance is, is not known. It is said to be placed over the arch of the gate-ways and is modelled in mortar—(chunam).

Another form of amulet very commonly used in Western Countries from the earliest of time is the crescent, representing the Moon and so the



goddesses to which the Moon was sacred. Mohammedan children wear the crescent hung from the neck ; and a crescent-shaped ornament is very commonly worn by the Canarese people round Bangalore. This ornament is known amongst them as the "Moon" ornament, but they apparently attach no importance to it as a protective against the Evil Eye. Boar's tusks, so set as to make a crescent, are used as an amulet against "Drishti", so also are tiger's claws, set either back to back or so as to make a crescent. Horns have always been looked upon as powerful amulets, and this idea has probably arisen from their resemblance in shape to that of the Crescent moon. Cows and bullocks horns have been very widely used as protectives, and though their use in ancient time was more common, still they are used fairly frequently even now. In Southern India the skull and horns of a bullock stuck up on a pole is a common object in the fields, and such objects have been seen in the jungle tracts of South Canara, where a bison head and horn was seen in one field. There is no doubt as to the reason of the use of this object. The people readily admit that it is used as a protection against "Drishti."

Elworthy says : "We may without discussion assume that the horse-shoe wherever used is the handy conventional representative of the crescent." Allowing this assumption, it becomes clear how it is that the horse-shoe is so commonly used as an amulet. The belief that an old horse-shoe picked up brings "good luck" is familiar to every one, and all over Europe the horse-shoe nailed up over door-ways is not an uncommon object. The horse-shoe being made of iron enhances its value as a charm against witchcraft. Frazer in the "Golden Bough" says : "Iron therefore may obviously be employed as a charm for banning Ghosts and other dangerous Spirits". In India this belief in the protective power of iron is held by all who practise magic. A charm is made from an old horse-shoe in the form of a bangle. The mantravadi after having the bangle made performs certain ceremonies over it, and it is then put on the right upper arm if the subject is a man or on the left upper arm, if a female. This is considered to be a very powerful charm against the Evil Eye, and against Evil Spirits generally. This amulet is also placed on a woman's arm if her labour is unduly prolonged and is believed to very quickly bring about the desired result.

Monier Williams in his book "Brahmanism and Hinduism" says that a small iron ring is commonly carried about as an amulet, and if set with pearls it is considered to be particularly effective. This belief in the efficacy of iron against witchcraft and Evil Spirits is shown in many other ways. Some article made of iron is placed near women after child-birth and is also kept close to the newly born infant to ward off evil. The "Dombars" a wandering



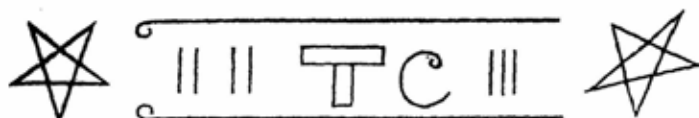
tribe in Mysore, who are by profession tumblers and acrobats, are said to wear an iron bangle on the arm to keep off evil.

Evil spirits are kept confined to certain trees by driving iron nails with appropriate ceremonies into the trees. In certain cases where a person who is possessed by an evil spirit, the patient is nailed by a lock of hair to a tree, the exorcist after conjuring the spirit to depart cuts off the lock and leaves it hanging suspended by the nail. In some cases the lock is torn out by the roots by the struggles of the patient during the departure of the spirit. The spirit is ordered to take up its abode in the tree, and the iron nail serves to a large extent to prevent it from leaving its prison.

The use of bright objects worn round the neck or otherwise prominently displayed to catch and avert the evil look is common. In one of the necklaces shown will be seen a bright gold bead ; in another a small bright metal disc with two gold beads one on each side of it, two bits of coral, and blue glass, and gold beads strung alternately on the string. These are made and sold in the bazaar as protectives against "Drishti". On the first necklace are other objects, viz., two cowries—concha veneris—of phallic significance and widely recognized as being powerful amulets, a piece of bear skin, also used an amulet a human tooth and two twisted objects. These last are said to be a bean of some sort and are recognized amulets. It has not been possible so far to find out what they actually are. The thread on which these objects are strung consists of three strands of different colours—red, white and black. Coloured strings and threads are commonly used in witchcraft, and have been used from very early times. Persius mentions the tying of threads of many colours round the necks of infants as part of a charm against fascination. Colours have a certain significance. Black is looked upon as being particularly associated with magic. Black threads and strings are used frequently in India in the tying—on of charms. Black beads are frequently used as part of an amulet—the necklace now shown as two of these with a bright red bead between them, all three being strung on a cord composed of black, red and white threads.

Another necklace, will be seen to be made up of a thick strand of black threads on which are strung a square case bearing on it the image of Hanuman, and on either side of this two small cylindrical silver cases. These usually contain charms either written on paper or parchment. Hanuman is considered to be a powerful protector, and his image on this amulet makes it especially efficacious. The small cylindrical cases are very commonly used in India to hold charms for protection against all ills fascination included. They are known in URDU as "THAWIZ "

and in Tamil as "THAIETHAY". They may be seen at any time worn either round the neck, or waist or tied on the arm. The written charms carried in these cases are of many kinds, and one was obtained from a Moham-medan Mushayaq in Bangalore. It begins with the seal of Sulieman Pagumber, who is the king of all demons, djinns and fairies which is written as follows:—



Underneath this is inscribed a magic square, in which are written the magic numbers which on being added up either horizontally, vertically or obliquely give a total of 15.

6	1	8
7	5	3
2	9	4

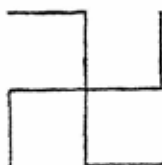
These figures must not be written in any order but in a particular way, or the power of the charm is lost. When writing it a pepper corn must be held between the teeth, as the pungent smell from the pepper is conveyed by the breath on to the charm. This enhances its potency. When the charm is written the paper is folded up, coated with wax, put into a case and sealed up. This is said to be a powerful charm against the power of the Evil Eye. This charm, in fact all charms, must be written with a reed pen, and the ink used must be saffron water.

The use of these magic squares is of very ancient origin. Everyone will call to mind also the general belief in certain numbers being either lucky or unlucky 3, 7 and 13 for instance. Other written charms consist of either invocations of the deity, or of cabalistic words which are made up of the initial letters of certain words which are believed to have great power in averting evil. Space and time will not permit of this part of the subject being more fully dealt with.

Children being peculiarly susceptible to fascination certain means are used in India to avert the evil. A very common practice is disfiguring the face by means of black dots made with the soot collected from an oil lamp. A black mark is put on the cheek of the child or on the forehead, or the eye-

lids are painted black. A string of small bells\* is frequently seen tied round the waists of small children. This is a protection against the dreaded "Drishti". A curious fact about these bells is that they exactly resemble in very many cases, those on the ordinary "coral and bells" used by Western babies; similar bells are found in ancient Egyptian charms. Another interesting point is that coral is used to this day, in India as a charm against "Drishti", in the form of beads or in small pieces suspended from the neck. Coral has from the most ancient times been held to be a powerful amulet especially for children.

Another ornament, one worn by female children in India, suggests from its shape that it may have a phallic significance, and therefore was originally used as a protective amulet. The ornament referred to is the heart or leafshaped piece of silver worn suspended from the waist. Its shape is that of the yoni—and also resembles the fig leaf—which has a phallic significance. May it not be that this was originally used as an amulet? the idea of sympathetic magic being the reason of its shape and use.



The cross, in the shape of the "Swastika" or fylfot is the only form used so far as can be discovered in India as an amulet. This is used by Marwadis, and on the second day of their New Year, when they open their new account books it is written on the first page above the entries. It is called "SAKIA" by these people and is also inscribed on the inside of the Cash Chest.

It is also said to be worn as a charm round the neck, but no such charm is so far been procured. It protects against the Evil Eye, and is a general bringer of "good luck". It is the sign of both Vishnu and Lakshmi. This sign may be seen on the wall beside the door ways of the Marwadis places of business in Cavalry Road, in Bangalore. This sign is of very ancient origin and is said to be a sun symbol, and Elworthy remarks that "As a mystic sign it is said to have travelled further than any other symbol of antiquity. It is known all over Asia including Japan; all over Europe from Ireland to Greece, Sicily and Malta. It is found on the oldest Greek Coins, on Etruscan Vases, and on the Newton Stone, an ancient Celtic monument at Aberdeen."

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\* It is believed in parts of Italy that the Devil himself will be driven off by the sound of bells however faint, and, believing that thunderstorms are directly due to Satan, the village bell ringers at the first sign of a thunder cloud ring the bells—it is not quite clear whether this is meant to keep Satan away directly, or to give warning to the farmers to bring forth their protections, and by praying and watching to avert the impending trouble.—Ed.

In the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans spitting was considered to be a protection against fascination, and this fact is mentioned by many of the writers of that period. Human saliva, especially fasting saliva, has always been held to have great virtue. Spitting three times into the breast of the person who fears fascination is a very ancient custom, and is mentioned by Theocritus. In connection with this a method of averting the effects of the Evil eye as described by a Native Officer in the Indian Army may be related. The procedure is as follows:—A pinch of dust is taken from the heel part of the footprint of the fascinator by the person overlooked. He then spits three times on to the spot from which the dust was taken, returns to his house, and throws the dust into the fire. This custom of spitting three times to avert evil has been a very wide spread one, and was used, not only in Europe, but in Africa amongst the Mandingoes, and in India.

It is not possible within the limits of a short paper to deal in any way fully with the subject of the Evil Eye. It is hoped that enough has been said to show how wide a field it embraces, and how even at the present day many customs and acts which have lost their original significance can be traced back to have their origin in this superstition. Only a few points have been dealt with and that in a very superficial manner it is feared.

A very interesting portion of the subject, that dealing with the ceremonies that are performed in Southern India to avert the Evil Eye has not been touched upon, and a few examples will now be given of those actually performed at the present time. The ceremony called ARATHI which has already been mentioned consists of waving in a particular manner, a vessel containing certain substances supposed to have special protective powers, (or a lamp) before the affected person. The vessel of lamp is passed from head to foot and back again with a more or less a circular movement for a specified number of times, it may be 3, 5, or 7 times. This is supposed to remove the evil influence. Dubois-description of the ceremony almost exactly describes the manner in which it is performed to this day. He says "A lamp made of kneaded rice flour is placed on a metal dish or plate. It is then filled with oil or liquefied butter and lighted. The woman each take hold of the plate in turn and raise it to the level of the person's head for whom the ceremony is being performed, describing a specified number of circles with it. Instead of using a lighted vessel they sometimes content themselves with filling a vessel with water coloured with saffron, vermilion and other ingredients."

The ceremony as done now and described by an educated man is as follows:—

“A lamp is made of cowdung or flour, in the ordinary “chirag” shape and filled with ghee, and is decorated with three kinds of flowers,—red, white and yellow. It is then lighted and passed 3 or 7 times in front of the person from head to foot and back again in a circular manner. The lamp is then taken to where 4 roads meet, a circle is made round the lamp with water and it is left there”.

It is remarkable how closely this description tallies with that given by the Abbé. A variation of this ceremony a lighted lamp similar to the one described above, is floated on turmeric water contained in a large shallow dish. This is waved up and down before the overlooked person either 3 or 7 times. The lamp is then closely covered with a small earthen pot and an old slipper put on top of the pot. If the water is drawn up into the pot which will certainly happen and it fits closely enough, the charm has been successful. The water is then thrown away where four paths or roads meet.

Another ceremony in which the act of spitting occurs:—3 different kinds of oil—gingelly, ghee and lamp oil are put in a vessel which is set on the fire till the oil takes fire and burns. The burning oil is taken to the doorway of the house where the overlooked person takes three separate mouthfuls of water and spits each mouthful into the burning oil. Another ceremony in which a black animal takes part. Gingelly oil is placed in a vessel over the fire until it burns. Powdered pepper and black margosa leaves are mixed with some cooked rice and the oil is poured on to the mixture and well stirred in. A handful of the mixture is offered to the overlooked person, and as he is about to take it into his mouth it is quickly with drawn and given to a black dog. The rest of the mixture must then be eaten by the patient. Black animals when used in such ceremonies must have no white hairs upon them. In some cases a black goat is passed 7 times from the head to the feet of the person. The goat is then killed and the skin and flesh given to the poor. No portion of the animal must be kept in the house. By some it is considered to be sufficient if the affected person touches the goat with his right hand.

Dubois says that Arathi is one of the commonest of the religious ceremonies of the Hindus and that they invented it to avert and contract the influence of the Evil Eye. Numerous other means are used, but this paper has already much exceeded the limits originally intended and the time allowed for reading. It is hoped that the paper, incomplete and superficial as it is well awaken or stimulate interest in this and kindred beliefs and practices,

and that members of the society will endeavour to collect further information on the subject. Any such information will be gratefully received by the writer. In conclusion I will again quote from Elworthy's book—"without believing either in magic or the Evil Eye, the writer fully agrees that "much may be learnt" (as Professor Tylor says in "Primitive Culture") from a study of the belief and to the many practices to which it has given rise. It is needful however to approach the subject with an open judicial mind and not to reject all that one superior understanding is unable to explain. Our senses, our experience, alike tell us that there exist many facts and appearances, which appealed strongly to the despised judgment of our fore-fathers, rude and cultured alike, which never have been either disproved or explained, and some of these facts have been held as firm articles of belief in all ages."

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## PUBLIC FESTIVALS.

### Muharram.

BY KHAN BAHADUR M. ABDUL RAHMAN.

Muharram introduces the grand festival of mourning for the martyrdom of Husein, the grandson of Muhammad the Prophet, which sad event occurred on the tenth day of this month. Muharram is the first lunar month of the Muhammadan year, and literally means *venerable, dignified*. During this month fighting is strictly prohibited. This custom was religiously adhered to by the Arabs (whose several tribes and clans were constantly at war throughout the year) from time immemorial, till the year 61 A. H. (680 A. D.), when there was a breach of it, by the unhappy occurrence of the above tragic event.

During the first ten days of Muharram there is a large display of *taboots*—structures made of bamboos covered with tinsel and profusely decorated—which are intended to represent the mausoleum erected in the plains of Karbala over the mortal remains of Husein. Various designs in copper, brass, silver and gold sheet, and mounted on poles called *alams* (*Punjas*) or standards,—emblematic of the different standards of Husein and his followers, are taken in procession and otherwise paraded in the streets. During these nights large meetings are organized, and the valorous deeds and the sufferings of the noble band of martyrs which have been idealized and dramatized in verse, are recited before an appreciative audience, whose feelings are raised up to a wonderful pitch. In the excitement of the moment, those assembled begin to beat their breasts, and the frenzy is so intense that all unconsciously they inflict such severe beating on their persons that blood has been known to flow in some cases.

The construction and display of Taboots, the parading of *punjas* (or *alams*), and the assuming of various disguises, which the ignorant class of the Muhammadans indulge in, as if it were a religious duty, are not warranted by the Muhammadan Law or any usage having the force of law. In these days the Muhammadans are supposed to fast, distribute alms liberally, and pray for the repose of the souls of Husein and his people, who were all murdered most brutally under the orders of Yezid, son of Maawia, who himself was ill-disposed towards Ali, the fourth Caliph, the lamented father of Husein, and who had usurped his (Ali's) throne.

At the beginning of this month in the year 61 A. H., a tragic drama was enacted at Karbala on the banks of the Euphrates, in which Husein, the son of Ali and grandson of the Prophet Muhammad by his daughter Fatima, perished with all the male members of the Prophet's family with one solitary exception, namely the sickly son of Husein—Zainulabidin. History presents but few instances where such indomitable courage, chivalry and nobleness of spirit were witnessed as on the side of Husein and his handful of people, while there was on the other side an unsurpassed display of cold-bloodedness and butchery by a large army of Yezid. The scene was laid on the western bank of the Euphrates, where Husein, lay encamped with his kinsmen, his two grown-up sons, a very few devoted followers, and a timorous retinue of women and children, intercepted on his way to Kufa where he, at the instigation of Yezid, had been invited by the Kufans (subjects of Yezid), with a false promise of their allegiance to him as Caliph against his rival (Yezid). Days passed but no trace of the promised support could be seen. On the contrary, the Kufans surrounded the tents of Husein, and as the murderous ruffians dared not come within the reach of his sword, they cut the victim and his people off from the waters of the Euphrates for days together, causing terrible suffering to the small band of martyrs. Yezid who was ruling at the time was anxious that Husein should acknowledge his suzerainty, but the latter refused to do so. In a conference with the Chief of the enemy, Husein offered to return to Arabia; to go to Damascus and negotiate directly with Yezid; or even to go to the frontiers of Korasan and there fight for the nation; but neither of these alternatives was granted. The commands of Yezid, the "Ommeyyade tyrant," were stern and inexorable: "that Husein should recognize him as Caliph, and in the event of his refusing to do so no mercy should be shown him and his party, but that they should be brought as criminals before the Caliph (Yezid) to be dealt with according to Ommeyyade sense of justice." As a last resource, Husein besought these monsters not to war upon helpless women and children but to end the unequal contest by taking his life; but this was of no avail. He asked his followers to save themselves by timely flight but they unanimously declined to desert him or survive him. One of the enemy's Chiefs, struck with horror at the sacrilege of warring against the grandson of the Prophet, deserted with thirty followers "to claim the partnership of inevitable death." One by one the noble band fell, picked off by the enemy's archers from a safe distance. Husein wounded and dying dragged himself to the riverside for a last drink, but they turned him off from there with arrows. His infant son was transfixed by a dart in his arms. His sons and his nephews were killed in his presence. He was pierced in the mouth with a dart as he raised a cup to assuage his burning thirst. He made a desperate attempt and threw himself in the midst of the enemy and killed a large number of them. But faint with loss of blood from the many wounds on his body, he soon sank to the ground, and Shoomar, one of the murderers, rushed on the dying hero, cut off his head, trampled on his body and subjected it to every ignominy. This was on the tenth day of Muharram. The tents were burnt afterwards, the ladies were taken prisoners and the sickly son of Husein was put in heavy chains. The head was carried to the castle of Kufa, and the inhuman governor, the worthy son of Maawia, struck it on the mouth with a cane. "Alas," exclaimed an aged Muslim, "on these lips have I seen the lips of the Apostle of God." The ladies and the sickly child were set at liberty subsequently, and the bodies of Husein and his people buried at Karbala a considerable time after the tragedy. Hence the importance attached to this place by Muhammadans. Even at this distant age and clime the tragic scene of the death of Husein awakens the sympathy of the coldest Mohammudan.

Thus fell one of the noblest spirits of the age, and his death proved to be the most important event in the history of the Saracens, excepting the mission of the Prophet. It sent a thrill of horror throughout Islam, and marks the outbreak of a schism amongst the followers of the Prophet. The adherents of Ali called themselves Shias or Sectaries; those who hold to the rightfulness of the three Caliphs before Ali, being known as Sunnis or Traditionists. The differences which the schism engendered arrested their progress and proved disastrous in more ways than one to Islam. Their united energy which should have been utilized against the foes of Islam of the time, was severed and used against each other.



The Ommeyyades had long been the rivals of the Hashmites, the family of the Prophet. They had persecuted Muhammad with bitter ferocity. They embraced Islam only after the fall of Mecca and that too with motives of self-interest and with a view to self-aggrandizement. The whole of the Ommeyyades were at the mercy of the Prophet, and had he so desired he could have put them to death; but his clemency knew no bounds. He freely pardoned his bitterest enemies. The mercy thus shown to them by the Prophet, they repaid later by their atrocity towards the grandson of the Prophet and his family.

However disastrous the massacre of Hussein may have been politically or otherwise, it can have no religious significance. The special ordination of the Prophet from the Most High came to an end with his death, and his spiritual mantle could not fall on the shoulders of any of his followers however worthy he may be, or whatever his relationship be to the person of the Prophet. The lesson which the episode inculcates is of the highest value. It holds forth a hero who displays all that is noble and worthy of emulation in a man's character. His firmness, patience and resignation under the stress of circumstances, his indomitable courage, his regard for the safety of those that followed him, his fearlessness in holding to what he believed to be the truth, and his utter disregard of all consequences in declaring openly what he felt with regard to the candidature of Yezid for the Caliphate, supply much food for reflection and are full of meaning. It would doubtless make one's life sublime if one were to act up to those principles.

### The Krittikotsava.

BY M. T. NARASIMHAJIYANGAR, B.A., M.R.A.S.

This is a feast observed on the Full Moon Day of the month of Kārthikai (Vrischika) corresponding to November or December. It is a day noted for illuminations throughout India. Just at the time of sunset, all temples, monasteries and houses will be seen best illuminated and the scenery will be so grand and picturesque that spectators are attracted in large numbers towards the main centres of illumination from distant places.

In temples of South India, the arrangement for illumination is somewhat unique. A long narrow piece of new cloth dipped in ghee or oil is rolled over a long pole; and the holder of the pole stands high at the top of the main door-way, when the image is taken out in procession. A new pot, with a piece of new cloth hanging outside, and full of ghee is first worshipped and this is lighted first. All the other lights are lighted from this; and *nīrdjāna* are made to the deities by means of these lights. The oil-cloth hanging from the pole is then lit by means of this main light in the pot. The pole is turned round gradually until the whole of the hanging cloth is in flame. The image is then taken out into the streets for procession. Meanwhile, all the lamps arranged in symmetrical lines around the temple, inside are lighted.

This grand illumination will be visible from distant villages and some of the temples situated on hills will present a splendid spectacle during this night for miles together. In some temples, they raise a pile of dry palm-leaves or cocoanut leaves before the temple-door and this is lighted instead of the oil-cloth described above.

In all Vishnu Temples, this celebration is strictly enjoined by the Śāstras, and is called *Vishnu tpa*. The Śaivaites celebrate what is called *Śiva-dipa* about the same date, though it sometimes differs from that of *Vishnu-dipa* by a day or so. After this *Utsava* is observed, the general belief is that until the month of Tai (*Makara*) no illumination is made; and hence the Tamilian's saying—*Vilakku avinju irukkiradu* (the light has been put out).



The Vaishnavas regard the period between this night and the asterism *Hasta* of the month of Tai (Makara)—which is the birth-day of the Sage *Śrīvatsānka* (Kūratt-Ālvān), the famous disciple of the great Reformer Śrī-Rāmanujāchārya—as a Vocation for the recital of the Sacred Tamil Works (Divya-Prabandha) or the *Four Thousand* (Verses) as they are called. No auspicious ceremonies or celebrations are observed by the orthodox Hindus during this period. They call it *Anadhyayana* (Period of non-recital), in accordance with the rules laid down in the *Pāncha-rātra* and other Āgama Works. A special license is however made for the recital of the 4,000 (*Divya Prabandha*), during the month of Mārkaṭi (Dhanus) when the *Koṭhārotsava* or *Adhyayanōtsava* is observed in all the great Viṣṇu Temples.

## ROMAN COINS IN INDIA.

The following excerpt from a note<sup>1</sup> by Mr. G. F. Gill on a find of Roman Coins in Pudukottai in 1898 may be of interest to readers of Mr. Narasimhachar's note on the Roman *denarius* found at Chitaldrug. Mr. Gill observes that in all the hoards of Roman coins yet discovered in South India, the majority of the coins are of two types only. One type corresponds with that described by Mr. Narasimhachar, issued by Augustus in honour of Caius and Lucius, his grandsons by his daughter Julia,<sup>2</sup> and the other a coin of Tiberius with the legend :—Obverse, TI. CAESAR DIVI AVG. F. AVGVSTVS. Head right, laureate. Reverse, PONTIF. MAXIM. Livia seated right, with sceptre and flower.

The note proceeds, "The great preponderance of these two types seems to point to large shipments of money having been made to India, in or shortly after the years in which they were issued.

"The most curious feature of this find is the treatment to which nearly all the coins have been subjected<sup>3</sup>. Various explanations suggest themselves. One, that the incisions were made in order to test the genuineness of the coins, is easily disproved; for, without exception, it is the head that is defaced. Had the object been merely to test the metal, a stab in any other part of the coin would have served the purpose, and out of the heads on 461 coins some at least would have escaped. The object must have been to destroy the authority by which the coin was guaranteed. The defacement was not effected in Rome; for<sup>4</sup> it would not have been done in such a hap-hazard way as is indicated by Nos. 19, 26, 56, 57; and further, similarly defaced coins would probably have been found in other hoards, if coins meant for India were thus defaced before being exported. But of such defaced coins there is no record. It follows, then, that the incisions were made in India, in order to put the coins out of circulation. Apparently this was not done because the coins were meant to be dedicated at some shrine<sup>5</sup> for, among the hoards so frequently found in temples, the coins are not treated in this way. It only remains, therefore, to suppose that these coins were defaced by the political authority, as being too much worn for further circulation, and were awaiting the melting pot, when the secret of their concealment was lost."

<sup>1</sup> Numismatic Chronicle, Third Series, Vol. XVIII, pp. 304—320.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Gill notes that this type when found in India is almost always plated. "This fact leads me to suggest that this type was especially struck for the trade with South India where perhaps the natives were less able than the Europeans to tell bad from good denarii. Cohen notes that there exist a great many imitations of this type, made by barbarians, and struck at a date long subsequent to the reign of Augustus.

<sup>3</sup> Out of the 501 coins in the Pudukottai find, 461 were defaced.

<sup>4</sup> This has been suggested to explain incisions on Gaulish coins.

<sup>5</sup> Some of these coins were defaced on the obverse, some on the reverse and some on both sides. These four types have a head on both obverse and reverse.

A similar hoard of coins was found near Bangalore on the 17th April, 1891, while excavating cuttings for store sidings of the railway to Hindupur, near Subedar's Chattram, between the Southern Mahratta Railway and Yeshwantpur,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles by rail from the City Station. The coins were in an earthen pot which was found about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet below ground, and was broken by a labourer's pickaxe. The hoard contained, in all, 163 coins, of which 75 were of the *C. M. Caesares* type found at Chitaldrug, and 76 of the *Pontif. Maxim.* type of Tiberius referred to above. The remaining 10 represented 8 different types, ranging in date from 21 B. C. to 51 A.D. Mr. Lewis Rice, in reporting on the find: observes, "So far as I am aware, this is the first find of Roman coins within the present territories of Mysore, although they have been found in considerable numbers in gold, silver and copper, at various places along the eastern and western coasts, and in the interior, especially near certain part of Coimbatore District."

F. J. RICHARDS.

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## THE MYTHIC SOCIETY.

### RULES.

1. The Society shall be called the MYTHIC SOCIETY.
2. The Society was formed with the object of encouraging the study of the Sciences of Ethnology, History and Religions, and stimulating research in these and allied subjects.
3. Membership shall be open to all European and Indian gentlemen, who may be elected by the Committee.
4. The Society shall be managed by a Committee consisting of the President, Vice-President, Honorary Treasurer, General Secretary with three branch Secretaries, and three other members, retiring annually, but eligible for re-election.
- Any four of the above members to form a quorum.
5. The subscription to be five rupees per annum to members resident in Bangalore, and two rupees per annum to members residing in the districts: payable on election, and annually before June 1st.
6. The transactions of the Society shall be incorporated and published in a Quarterly Journal which will be sent *free* to all members, and on sale at 8 annas per copy to non-members.
7. There will be nine Ordinary Meetings in each Session, at which lectures will be delivered; due notice being given by the General Secretary.
8. Excursions to places of Historical interest, will be arranged and intimated to members.
9. Members may obtain, on application to the General Secretary, invitation cards for the admission of their friends to the lectures.
10. The Annual General Meetings will be held in March.
11. Framing and alteration of Rules rests entirely with the Committee.

E. W. WETHERELL, *General Secretary*,  
BANGALORE.

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## SERPENT WORSHIP.

*A Paper read before the Mythic Society.*

BY THE REV. F. GOODWILL.

*(11th January, 1910.)*

Fergusson when writing his book on "Tree and Serpent Worship" makes a complaint that so little was available on the subject; that, though he had sought through hundreds of articles in the records of the Asiatic and kindred Societies, he had found not one article dealing specifically with the subject. Even after forty years, in which period the class of studies to which our subject belongs has received widespread attention, the complaint might be made with but little abatement of emphasis. References to the subject may be found in books of travel and of religious and ethnographical interest, but anything like a comprehensive view or exposition of the subject is not to my knowledge available. And yet it is a cult that meets us in the grey dawn of the world's history; with the very first knowledge of early man we find him reverencing the serpent, particularly the hooded snake; and that practice is in vogue to the present day in many countries, some of which are far from being unaffected by the ideals of modern civilization. It is a worship that has spread over the whole world, in countries so far apart geographically as Peru and Africa, India and Greece, Fiji and Italy. Because it is so common and so continuous in human life it might be assumed to be easy of explanation. But the converse rather is true.

It has so taken hold on the foundational emotions of man, has so penetrated all forms of his worship, has been so much tolerated and adopted by faiths whose principles are really inimical to it, that a clear statement of its essence and of its origin is almost impossible.

The first part of my paper attempts to suggest something of its nature and origin. It is commonly said that religion originated with primitive man in fear, that religious ceremonies have for their object the placation of supernatural beings supposed to be hostile to human life and happiness. And it is not surprising that the veneration of the serpent is often attributed to man's fear of its deadly poison, for the hooded snake is one of the most deadly of its tribe. Unquestionably there is that about the snake that is fearful and uncanny. It lies in concealment till an unsuspecting hand or foot touches it into lightning-like activity; it is silent in its movements to and fro beyond any creature of its size; its sinuous motion and speedy passage apparently without effort are in striking contrast to the movements of creatures dependent on legs and wings; and this combination of striking qualities must have unfavourably impressed primitive man, and have made him take, as we feel impelled to do now, the greatest care when moving to and fro at night, that time when ghostly powers are so active and malevolent. Moreover, serpent worship does not keep good company, and this fact must be placed in the scale when it is being attributed to the *fear* of man. Wherever human sacrifices have appeared in the history of religion there has appeared side by side with it serpent worship also. The converse is not equally true that wherever ophiolatry is known there human sacrifices are to be found; nor does it seem clear that human beings were offered to the snake. There the two are however in sinister company; and if we regard the one with the dread and horror that is instinctively associated with the other no wonder and no blame to us. The type of civilization that originates serpent worship is not high, but once it gains establishment in any country it may continue somewhat modified in spite of the influences of a much loftier civilization.

But this is not the whole story of the worship. We find that in practice to-day as also in history, snake worship is accompanied with much respect and veneration of the animal. Among primitive races it is not generally associated with evil influences, it is the good demon, the genius of the house, or of the family and tribe, and as such must be guarded and cared for even as it in turn guards and cares for individuals. It is only in Judaism and in its successor Christianity that the snake is cursed and is associated with evil. In Christianity it is the symbol of the great evil being, the Devil, the

enemy of righteousness and of God and good men, and by its means our first parents are said to have been beguiled and led into rebellion against God, to their eternal undoing. "That old serpent the devil" is the stern, almost contemptuous, way in which the seer who writes the book of Revelation speaks of it. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" says Paul, referring back to the early promise of the bruising of the snake-tempter. But if the account of Genesis be read without carrying back to it the influence of ideas that were developed later, it will be seen that even there the Semitic peoples had not learned wholly to condemn the serpent and its associations. It is the embodiment of skill, wisdom, fluent speech and of far-seeing purpose. It is not there identified, as later, with the *Devil*. At one period of their history even those stern monotheists, the Jews, gave way to ethnic influence, and began to worship the snake of brass that had been set up among them for their good in the wilderness; here again not fear but gratitude for the past and expectation of future blessings were the mainspring of their devotion.

Other associates of serpent worship in the world generally are sun and tree worship, and there appears to be a connection, more or less close, between them all. So in India we find that the stones which represent serpent worship in nearly every South Indian village are set at the foot of the *aswattha*, the sacred fig-tree, and set to face the rising sun. Sometimes they may be found under other trees, and facing the setting sun; the connection historically appears to be the same. Perhaps more important is the fact that the worship is associated with the worship of ancestors. The snake has come to be regarded as the symbol of immortality over a very wide area, and the connection may possibly be that it was believed that the souls of deceased ancestors were reincarnated in the snakes that were often to be seen about their graves, or even issuing from holes in the graves. We know that in early Egypt the worship of the snake was specially strong among people who were in any way connected with cemeteries, and that in such places snakes were specially the objects of worship. To our minds it may be clear that only because graveyards are generally neglected and avoided among simple peoples, and offer a convenient lurking place for snakes, that they could be found there in any numbers. The simple folk believed that these strange uncanny creatures to be found making their way among the mounds and stones, where rested the bones of their fathers, were the representatives and the embodiments of those ancestors. Hence it was a common custom in early Egypt to bring milk fruits and sweetmeats to the graves for the refreshment of their forefathers, now able in this form to appreciate and use the gifts. I wonder, if this theorizing be true, whether we may not see in the pouring out of milk into the holes where snakes are known to live, the

grave-like mounds and ant-hills cobras especially love, in the placing of fruits, etc., for their enjoyment, an unconscious imitation of the practice of antiquity which rose from the belief mentioned.

The idea that ancestors were reincarnated in serpents led to the belief that it was easily possible for them to pass from their snake-bodies into human form again. Everywhere the veneration of the snake is associated with the belief that that worship is particularly beneficial to childless women. It was so in antiquity, specially in Greece. Prof. Frazer says in his latest book:—"In order to obtain offspring, women used to resort to the great sanctuary of Æsculapius, situated in a beautiful upland valley, to which a path winding through a long wooded gorge, leads from the bay of Epidaurus. Here the women slept in the holy place, and were visited in dreams by a serpent; and the children to whom they afterwards gave birth were believed to have been begotten by the reptile. That the serpent was supposed to be the god himself seems certain; for Æsculapius repeatedly appeared in the form of a serpent, and live serpents were kept and fed in his sanctuaries for the healing of the sick, being no doubt regarded as his incarnations. Hence the children born to women who had visited a sanctuary of Æsculapius were probably fathered on the serpent-god. Many celebrated men in classical antiquity were thus promoted to the heavenly hierarchy by similar legends of a miraculous birth." One of the most celebrated soldiers and statesmen of history, Alexander, is credited with such an origin. By this time the deceased ancestors, incarnated in the serpent originally, have put on divine qualities and forms, though still able to take the serpent form, at will; and are able to give, not one life only, but abundant life out of their store of divine energy. In India to-day one of the chief functions of the good snake is to give children; for this perhaps as much as anything he is sought and offerings made to him. What logical connection might perhaps be traced by the Indian peasant woman as she earnestly performs her worship of the snake in the village ant-hill I cannot say; in all probability she would be able to give no account of the connection whatever. But it is matter for congratulation that the practices of the Grecian temples no longer continue, and that the blessing of offspring granted by the serpent is given to the worshipper we hope, through the medium of her lawful husband.

Along the same line of thought may be mentioned the *healing powers* with which serpent gods have been generally credited. The serpent was closely associated with Æsculapius in Greece, the god of medicine and healing generally. It has since classical times been the symbol of the medical art. Reference has been made to the Jews who had set up in the wilderness a brazen serpent as the sign of health and hope for all those who were sick to

death. This practice we may well suppose they had borrowed from Egypt, from the religion with which they had become familiar through long residence in the delta; or it may also have been common in the region whence the fathers originated or practised by the peoples through whose lands they were then passing. It is impossible to think of it as an isolated, insignificant act, or to consider it merely as being sympathetic magic which attempts to cure the poison bites by the sight of a lifeless representation of the creature that inflicted them. The healing virtues of this worship are keenly sought after, all about us to-day. Particularly, as I am informed, boils on the head, ear-ache, etc., are within the power of the snake-god to cure. Sometimes the snake charmer is sent for when ear-ache is obstinate, and the tail of the cobra is inserted into the troublesome organ and turned round there so that the fullest benefit may be conveyed to the patient. In West Africa he is invoked for blessing on crops, and in ancient Greece also the serpent-god was specially worshipped at the time of seed-sowing. This connects another thought to that of the life-giving power of the serpent, which is that he is the guardian of the soil, an earth-god living underground and giving his blessing to it below and above. And as the guardian of the soil he is responsible not only for its fruiting, but for all that is valuable and costly that may have been entrusted to the keeping of the earth. In India the serpent is closely connected with the guardianship of treasure that has been buried in the earth. We have heard many stories of fabulous treasure jealously guarded by a serpent of enormous size and fierceness that waits to strike whenever intruding hands lift the great stones that lie above the treasure vault. It is no wonder that, in view of all the blessings that the hooded cobra, the Naga of ancient India, can bestow on his devotees, he bears in Tamil the name of "nalla pambu," the good snake. Some of us from the West may have thought in the early days of our stay and study in this country that the name was given as a sort of spell against an evil chance, or may be that it was given as a *lucus a non lucendo*; but a fuller acquaintance with the history of our subject indicates that, deadly though it may be to those whose fate has been so decreed by the gods, it is believed to have precious gifts in its power for its worshippers. Hence it is venerated, its life spared from harm, it is fed and fostered not merely that it may do no harm, but because as universal practice avers, it is essentially good ("Midhittal kadiyan, viditthal kadippan").

Some time may be profitably given to a consideration of the peoples who in history and in modern life practise snake worship. It seems on the whole to have been no respecter of persons, but to have taken its worshippers from



all nations and tribes. Fergusson repeatedly affirms his belief that it must have had its origin in Asia among a people of Turanian origin, possibly among the earliest inhabitants of the Mesopotamian country. The Semites proper and the Aryans seem never to have taken to it whole-heartedly, and apart from the monotheism of Judaism and Christianity, found among Semites and Aryans, respectively, there may have been in those peoples a racial antipathy to the belief and practice. When they do countenance it, it is in accommodation to the religions and habits of the peoples whom they have conquered or with whom they associate. Mention has been made already in this paper to the strong influence of the cult in Greece; but it should be remembered that modern students of the religious and social life of that country are strong in their insistence on the different strata of racial life there, and insist that though Aryan gods were eventually identified with serpent worship, and their temples sacred to its sculptures or to the animal itself, it had its origin and stronghold in the life of the pre-Aryan inhabitants of the country, and is specially characteristic of their civilization. It is a vigorous growth that makes its way to the surface of the higher civilization imposed on the land, but its roots are deep down in an earlier national life. This is true of Babylon and Egypt also; the civilizations that have made those lands famous to the end of time were not the civilizations that bred the serpent and filled the land with its brood. In India it is especially connected with the non-Aryan peoples, with the tribes that have been forced to the hill tracts of the North, and with the Dravidian peoples of the South. The great North-country Nāg-Pāñchmi is not so much honoured in the land South of the Vindhyas; but it is among the Dravidians of South India and Ceylon that it is to be found in strength. But if not Brahmanical in origin it has involved the Brahman, so that, not only the ignorant uneducated ryot or non-caste but also the twice-born of this country, resort in time of need to the snake for spiritual assistance and material benefits. Were there a regular ritual associated with serpent-worship and temples numerous in honour of the god, it is likely that a closer connection would be established between it and the priestly caste of India. There are professional performers of snake pūja, men who are able, according to common belief, to utter special mantrams which have power to control the sacred creature, to bind it with a word so that it cannot escape from the charmed circle drawn about it, or to convey its active blessings to those seeking them under their direction. But usually the worship is of a direct character, simple as the civilization that taught it, the act and the offerings have the virtue that in higher worships belong to the mantram and the ritual.

But a closer association has been achieved between the Brahmanical religion of India and that of the primitive snake-worshippers. It has sent out some of its many roots into the very Vedas themselves. Scarcely a god of the great Hindu pantheon that is not in some way, probably a way more refined than that of Dravidian tradition, been connected with the cult of the serpent. Vishnu rests on the great world-snake, *Adi Sesha*; it overshadows him with its many hoods. Snake-worship is particularly connected with the name of his son *Subrahmanyan*. The great god *Siva*, the god of supreme power in South India, is often represented as an ascetic with serpents twining themselves about his hair and neck, and in this character resorting to and dwelling chiefly in cemeteries. Though the worship of the serpent is perhaps less obviously connected with his name than with that of *Vishnu*, yet it seems to me that this deity makes the serpent more a part of himself and identifies it more with his character. And this is significant when it is remembered that *Siva* is generally believed by scholars to be largely the creation in Hinduism of the indigenous religions of the country acting upon the religious consciousness of the Aryan conquerors. They found themselves unable to do away with the serpent religions of the conquered race, hence have linked them closely with the worship of their own great deities. And the end of it is as the beginning, that the wearer of the serpent garland is found where serpent-worship in the chill dawn of the world flourished most vigorously, in the cemetery.

I cannot do better than to conclude with the summary of *Barth* where he says:—"The serpent religions of India form a complex whole, and such as is not accounted for by viewing it as a simple worship of deprecation. We can distinguish in it (1) the direct adoration of the animal, the most formidable and mysterious of all the enemies of man; (2) a worship of the deities of the waters, springs and rivers, symbolised by the waving form of the serpent; (3) conceptions of the same kind as that of the Vedic *Ahi*, and connected closely with the great myth of the storm and the struggle of light with darkness. Even in places where serpent-worship, properly speaking, is out of the question, offerings are made to these reptiles, and almost everywhere the people manifest a repugnance to the killing of them, notwithstanding the ravages wrought by their bites."

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## THE LAST SIEGE OF SERINGAPATAM.

*A Paper read before the Mythic Society.*

BY THE REV. E. W. THOMPSON.

The object of this short paper is not to tell again an oft-told story, but simply to touch upon a few points of antiquarian or historical interest in the investment and capture of Seringapatam in A. D. 1799. It may be well to mention, first of all, some of the books to which one must go for reliable information.

### A Bibliography.

There is one work which is easily ahead of all others in the variety and authoritativeness of the information which it gives about the last siege of Seringapatam. (1) "*A View of the Origin and Conduct of the War with Tippu Sultan, comprising a Narrative of the Operations of the Army under the command of Lieutenant-General Harris and of the Siege of Seringapatam*" by Lieut.-Col. Alexander Beatson: London, 1800, is indispensable to those who would have a detailed and accurate knowledge of the events leading up to the downfall of the Mohammedan kingdom of Mysore. Beatson's book, as the title indicates, contains a number of important political papers, dealing both with the causes of the war and the settlement which was made at its close; but its chief value lies in its description of the military operations—the march up to Seringapatam, and the investment of the fortress. The author was Surveyor-General to the army in the field and he writes as an eyewitness of and participant in the struggle. His verbal accounts are accompanied by the maps and plans which an officer in his position was able to procure. Moreover the book was written largely on the voyage home to England, when the war was just over and its events were fresh in mind.

(2) "*Memoirs of the Early Life and Service of a Field Officer on the Retired List of the Indian Army*": London, 1839. This book is from the pen of the Oriental scholar, Major Price. He was unfortunate enough to lose a leg at the siege of Dharwar in 1791, and was employed subsequently in India chiefly in a civil capacity, but he accompanied the Bombay army under General Stuart as one of the Prize Agents. The Bombay detachment, it will be remembered, after effecting a junction with General Harris, crossed over to the north bank of the river, and this book is useful because it gives the impressions of one who saw the siege from that point of view. It con-

tains also an amusing account of the troubles and perplexities of the Prize Agents in awarding their share of spoil to some of the principal officers of the victorious army.

(3) "*A Review of the Origin, Progress, and Result of the late Decisive War in Mysore in a letter from an Officer in India*": London, 1800. I have quoted only a fragment of the title which, if printed in full, would occupy nearly one page of this journal. This book is disappointing in most respects. It consists of a dedication to the Right Honourable Henry Dundas by Henry Wood, Esq., M.P., Colonel and late Chief Engineer, Bengal, followed by a letter "written from Madras by an Officer, a friend of mine, of the Bengal Establishment", and several Notes and Appendices. By far the most interesting of these is the Appendix which contains the papers relating to the Jacobin Club in Seringapatam. On the 15th of May, 1797, Tippu Sultan did honour to the Republican flag by ordering salvos to be fired from all the guns in the fort and camp; and the little band of Frenchmen having erected upon the parade a Tree of Liberty surmounted by a Cap of Equality, Citizen Ripaud delivered a fervid oration, of which a graphic passage describes how his blood ran cold and his hair stood on end while he saw as in a vision the measure of barbarity and atrocity filled by those ferocious English. The ceremony was concluded by the citizens taking an oath, swearing them to "Hatred to all kings except Tippu Sultan the Victorious, the Ally of the French Republic. War against all Tyrants and Love towards their Country and that of Citizen Tippu." One knows not whether to admire more the humour or the pathos of this quaint combination of extreme democracy and unlimited despotism.

(4) Besides these three books there are others which may be consulted with advantage. Wilks' "*History of Mysore*" is a mine of information on all the dealings of the British with the Mysore power in the eighteenth century. His employment at the Residency a few years after the siege had taken place gave him access to the best sources of information, and his account of the siege is vivid, though it will be found he relies chiefly on Beatson. Buchanan's "*A Travel from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*" contains an account of Seringapatam as it appeared a year after the assault. Its description of the public buildings in the capital is particularly valuable. Another traveller who must be mentioned is Lord Valentia. He visited Seringapatam in 1804 and published a diary of his "*Travels*" in three sumptuous volumes, profusely illustrated by the artist who accompanied his Lordship on his tour through the East. Valentia came to India in an age when British Lords were a rarity, and he was received everywhere with a profound respect which did not fail to beget in

him a corresponding self-complacence. His remarks on the siege of Seringapatam are of considerable interest and value, and I shall have to quote a passage from his book presently. Lastly one may name the "*Despatches*" of Arthur Wellesley, both those in the collection of Col. Gurwood and in the supplementary collection, edited by the Second Duke of Wellington. There are many references in Wellesley's letters to the condition of the fort of Seringapatam under his administration as commandant and to the changes and improvements which he advocated or effected.

(5) Among modern guide-books we need mention only Malleeson's monograph, "*Seringapatam, Past and Present*." It is written rather in Malleeson's earlier and worse style with plenty of the "big drum and trumpet"; but it is none the less convenient summary of the history of the place. There are, however, two points which call for explanation or correction.

#### A Query, wanted an explanation.

In his preface Malleeson says "the breach remains unrepaired" and he repeats the remark subsequently. These words were written in 1876, and they appear in a new edition of the book unaltered and without any explanatory note. All know that to-day the main breach has been repaired, and that the position of it is marked by the new masonry in the west face of the fort.

Have these repairs been effected since the year 1876? The breach in the *faussebraye* still remains, and it marks the extent of the breach in the main rampart. Malleeson, however, is speaking not of the *faussebraye* but of the main rampart. I would propound therefore as one of the queries which the Editor of this Journal solicits so earnestly—"When was the breach in the main rampart closed?" Anyone with access to the records of the D.P.W. may re-solve this doubt. If the repairs were made subsequent to the year 1876, the Society will have to deplore another unnecessary and vandalistic restoration, while the historian may record another instance of British military delays, for in the year 1800 or thereabouts Wellesley was trying to stir up the Military Board in Madras to get the main breach closed, by warning them that the fort was more accessible then than on the day of assault and that unless they moved speedily, what with weather and the encroachments of the river, they were likely to have soon no fort left.

#### An Error.

The second point is one on which Malleeson is patently in error. He is evidently somewhat uncertain as to the place and manner of Tippu's death. He knows that Tippu did not die as popularly supposed, in the existing

water-gate on the north face; but he seems to have been influenced by a laudable desire to utilize local traditions and to reconcile them, if possible, with the only historical narrative known to him. His account of Tipu's final effort against the foe is repeated twice in his little book. According to Malleeson, when word was brought to the Sultan that the assault had commenced, he rose from his meal, hastily washed his hands and proceeded along the outer rampart in the direction of the breach. He succeeded for a short time in holding up the left column of the attack, but being forced to retreat, he fell back along the northern face on the outer rampart. He descended from this rampart and "*from the outside* reached the sally-port (the present water-gate). He mounted his horse and endeavoured to force his way through the sally-port. The Sultan still endeavoured to press his way, when his horse was shot under him and almost immediately afterwards he received a third wound, severe though not fatal. His attendants then placed him in a palanquin. But as it was impossible in the crowd and tumult to move this conveyance, Tipu *would appear to have left it and to have crawled towards a gateway at a little distance leading into a garden.*" Thus Malleeson's account of the final scene is that Tipu who was on the outer rampart managed to get to the *outside* of the gateway in this rampart; that he was wounded in this gateway (which is the existing water-gate) while trying to force his way through it from the outside, and that he then crawled some distance away from this gateway and expired in another small gateway which, he says, has been demolished. This account contains two serious blunders. In the first place it ascribes to Tipu an impossible feat. An examination of the outer wall will prove that there is no way by which Tipu could have descended from it to the outside of the water-gate. Unless he had flung himself and his horse down from the rampart, he could not have reached the gateway on the outside. There is, however, no need to suppose that he attempted or accomplished anything of the sort. All our authorities—Beatson, Price, Wilks, Buchanan and the rest — give a perfectly consistent and unanimous account of what took place, which is, that Tipu descended from the outer rampart by a rampart on the inside, that he crossed by a bridge over the inner ditch, and that he was wounded and ultimately slain in a gateway of the inner rampart which led to his palace. The second error in Malleeson's account is the conjecture that Tipu was wounded in one gateway and was finally slain in another. This is, so far as I am aware, a pure conjecture on the part of Col. Malleeson due to his desire to make use of a local tradition. It is plainly opposed to the accounts by eyewitnesses of the finding of Tipu's body, which are still in our possession. These all agree in asserting that where Tipu was wounded, there he fell; that where he fell there he lay; that where he lay he was slain by a British soldier; and that where he was slain, his body, lifeless but still

warm, was found. Moreover these accounts mention the fact that the body of the horse and the overturned palanquin lay by or over the dead Sultan—a fact which in itself disposes of Malleson's theory. The simple explanation of this confusion and error in Malleson's narrative appears to be that he had not seen or read Beatson's book, and that he used the account given by Wilks with insufficient care. Wilks' account is based expressly on Beatson's book, but in the absence of maps it is not quite so clear as its original and it is condensed of necessity.

One needs perhaps to apologize for criticizing so deservedly respected a writer as Malleson; but the greater his authority, the more mischief his errors are likely to occasion. One cannot but regret that a new edition should be issued of his book without the explanation which should be forthcoming in the one case, and the correction which is due in the other.

#### The Inner Ditch.

Having alluded to the Bibliography of our subject and made a few comments on one or two questions that are suggested by the books named, I will pass on to the problem of the Inner Ditch, because its disappearance is the cause of almost all the confusion in our ideas of what took place at the assault. We learn from Beatson and other authorities that after the war which was terminated in 1792 by the treaty so humiliating to Tippu, the Sultan set to work to multiply the defences of Seringapatam. The East and North faces which had been threatened by Cornwallis were especially the objects of the Sultan's solicitude. The North-east angle was greatly strengthened by new and intricate works which may be seen to-day and are still in good order, while the whole of the North and West faces of the fort were to be improved by digging an inner ditch behind the main rampart, and raising on the inside a new line of inner ramparts. These works, we are told, were well advanced, though not quite complete, when the siege of 1799 was formed. We know, however, that the inner rampart ran along almost the whole length of the North face. These new works are shown quite plainly in Beatson's map of the North-west angle of the fort; and this is the only spot where they can be traced to-day. Standing upon the breach and looking riverwards one sees the imperfect glacis, the retaining wall of the outer ditch, the outer ditch, and the *fausse-braye*, which are enumerated in that order by the military authors. The rampart upon which one stands is the "outer" or main rampart. Then turning about and facing towards the huge mound of earth which still towers aloft behind the North-west bastion, one may look into the depths of the inner ditch. The mound is all that is left of the cavalier, and if its flanks be examined, the ends of the inner rampart will be discovered; for the inner ramparts on the North and West faces had their



point of junction in this cavalier. Save, however, in this angle there is no trace to-day either of inner ditch or inner rampart.

When the British occupied the fort, they found that the inner ditch was a serious public nuisance, and a menace to the health of the troops in garrison. In making it Tippu, with his usual lack of good sense, had cut through the sewers which had formerly discharged into the outer ditch and thence into the river. The result was that the sewage of the town collected in a stagnant and putrescent mass in the inner ditch. Moreover the additional rampart was of little value as a defence. It had all the defects of the alignment of the outer rampart and might be easily commanded from it. The inner ditch had been brought so near to the outer rampart that the latter was in danger of giving way in places and falling into the ditch. On these grounds the Commandant, Wellesley, reported strongly against the retention of the new lines of fortification, and he urged that the inner ditch should be filled in by throwing back into it the inner rampart. His opinion was opposed to that of his engineer officer, and General Ross, the Chief Engineer, was sent up from Madras to make a report and adjudicate between the contending plans. By the courtesy of the Madras Government I have been furnished with a copy of his report. It is a lengthy document, bearing the date—August 19th, 1800. One paragraph is sufficient for our purposes:—"The inner ditch on the west and north faces is an immense excavation chiefly from rock and nearly forty four feet wide at bottom, and should, when the best of the earth that lays in heaps about the fort is appropriated to the completion of the rampart, have the remainder thrown into it, together with all the rubbish and spare ground in the place." Upon this recommendation of their Chief Engineer, the Military Board reported as follows to the Governor of Madras, Lord Clive:—"It has been represented to us that the effect of the noxious exhalations proceeding from the stagnant water in the inner ditch of Seringapatam has contributed to occasion the present unhealthiness of the troops in that garrison and that this effect is increasing daily in an alarming degree. As it is of importance to remove this evil without delay, we beg leave to recommend that the Pioneers may be immediately employed in filling the inner ditch in the manner recommended by the Chief Engineer."

The Pioneers were employed by Wellesley as soon as the orders of Government were received; but after a few weeks of work they were called away south by a rising of some Polygars, and everything came to a standstill. After some time Wellesley obtained permission to put the work out on contract and the job was given to a Brahman, named Shamayya, the same man as he who repaired the bund of the Moti Talab Tank at Tonnur near Seringapatam, which had been breached by Tippu's orders in 1799. In 1802 Wellesley was



able to record triumphantly that his "great work" was finished. This much we may learn by tracking the Inner Ditch through the volumes of Wellesley's "*Despatches*."

The broad greensward which borders the main rampart on the North and West faces of the fort, and the line of tamarind trees planted thereon, mark the site of the inner ditch and rampart. It is unfortunate for those who love to intensify the thrill of the imagination by contact with the actual scene, and by the sight of the venerable accessories of historical events, that the inner gateway in which Tippu fell was destroyed along with the inner rampart; for it stood on the inner line of defence and not on the outer, like the existing water-gate. Our records are perfectly explicit and quite adequate; but lest there should still be some of the old leaven of ignorance and unbelief working, let me quote in conclusion a paragraph from Lord Valentia's diary. It is dated March 4, 1804:—"I dedicated this day to the viewing of Seringapatam. My first visit was to the curtain where the breach had been made. I was attended by several gentlemen who had been present at the storming, and who kindly pointed out every circumstance to me. During the storm of the 4th of May, in the heat of the attack, a small party of the soldiers passed from the outer to the inner rampart, over a wall which united them, though it was of great height and not above a foot wide at the top. The attempt was indeed so hazardous that the same men were afraid, on the following day, when their blood was cool, to re-cross it. These, and a larger party who made their way in another direction, greatly assisted in the attack, by flanking the Sultan and his attendants, who were bravely defending traverse after traverse, on the outer rampart, and were slowly retiring before the superior force of the storming party, to the gateway in the inner wall. The inner ditch and rampart have been wholly destroyed, except in the spot where the wall gave a passage to the soldiers. It is a singular circumstance that the besiegers had no idea of the existence of such a ditch and inner wall till the storm took place, though they had native spies constantly in the place. The gateway in which Tippu fell has been destroyed, with the inner work; a road is formed in its stead, with trees planted on each side, which will ultimately add much to the beauty of the town."

That the besiegers should not be aware of the existence of the inner rampart may appear to us well-nigh incredible, but that Lord Valentia and his informants did not exaggerate their ignorance may be seen from the following extract from Major Price's diary. On May 3rd, the very day before the assault was delivered, he writes:—"It was the opinion of several among us, that through the exterior breaches, might be discovered a third parapet within; perhaps recently constructed to cut off the breach. This was, how-

ever, disputed ; and we could but ejaculate our hope that nothing of the kind was in existence ; since, in all human probability, the die would be cast in less than twenty-four hours." One recalls too the vehement exclamation of surprise which burst from the lips of General Baird when he surmounted the breach and saw the inner ditch yawning under his feet.

### The Gateway in which Tippu fell.

We are able to determine the position of the inner gateway, where Tippu's body was found, within a few yards. Upon one of Beatson's maps of the fort there appears the inscription, "Tippoo killed here." The scale of this map is so small, and so many details of fortification are omitted, that unfortunately it is not possible with its aid to reconstruct the walls and gates in the locality, but it is clear that the spot indicated by Beatson was close to, and over against, the existing water-gate in the outer rampart. There was one hundred years ago, as there is to-day, a street running across the breadth of the fort from south to north, which was the main artery for traffic in that direction. It skirted the eastern wall of Tippu's palace enclosure, and led down to the riverside, giving convenient access to the water to most of the inhabitants of the fort. It is obvious that both the gateways of the inner and outer rampart must have been situated on this line of traffic. The outer one which stands to-day is still famous as the "water-gate," and Beatson himself describes the inner one as a "Sally-port" and "water-gate." With this agrees well what John King, an ensign in the 338 Foot, has recorded in his narrative of the finding of Tippu's body.\* He says "a man, by name Meer Nudeen, kilkdar of the fort and depogah of the toshakhane or treasury, said that the Badshaw (for so Tippu was then called by all his subjects) had been wounded and was then in the water-gate (called by the Hindus the Huli Bagh.)" King goes on to tell us that among the hundreds of corpses removed from this gateway was the body of a beautiful Brahmin girl, who had evidently been caught in the terrible press of fugitives under the arch and crushed to death. Her body had no marks of violence upon it. "She must have been a Brahmin girl who was going for water (for that is the gate through which the Brahmins go, and indeed during the siege all the inhabitants went there)". Thus far the ensign.

It is quite clear, therefore, that both gateways were described differently as water-gates ; for both lay on the same line of communication with the riverside, and must have been close to and nearly opposite to each other. It is possible, and indeed probable, that they were not exactly opposite to

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\* This most graphic narrative existed in manuscript form only until it was published by Mr. Forrest in his "*Seepoy Generals*" a few years ago.

each other; for it is rare in Indian forts to find two gateways on the same straight alignment. It now becomes easy to explain the strength and persistence with which local tradition attaches to the existing gateway, the romance and the tragedy of Tippu's death. When the inner water-gate was destroyed, its historic associations were transferred to its neighbour and complement, the outer water-gate. Probably a little excavation in the neighbourhood at the expense of a few rupees would discover both the site of the bridge across the inner ditch by which Tippu gained an entrance into the inner gateway, and also the foundations of the gateway itself.

### Some small matters of detail.

The passage by which the party of the 12th Regiment crossed to the Cavalier and inner rampart provides an example of how the most authentic histories will differ in matters of detail. Beatson describes it as a "batardeau," which is defined as a "coffer-daeer" or wall built in a ditch to hold up water. Valentia, nearly five years later, calls it a wall, and says it was still preserved as a memento of British valour and intrepidity. Wilks describes it as a "strip of terre plein" left after the names of Indian coolies in an excavation—what is known in Kanarese as a *sākshi gudi*; and someone else talks about "a plank to roam across by the workmen for purposes of communication and carelessly left in place."

The question is not quite so trivial as it may seem; because we wish to know whether this passage was part of a temporary structure hastily thrown up to cut off the walk, or whether it belonged to the permanent works of the fort, and was a masonry dam, designed to hold up and divert some of the water, which was taken in from the river at the north-west angle, along the inner ditch on the north face. The terms used by Beatson and Valentia point in the latter direction, while Wilks seems to incline to the former view. This passage is marked clearly upon Beason's map of the north-west angle.

During the last fortnight of the siege Tippu took his meals and resided in one of the gateways on the north face, which Beatson calls the 'Cullaly Deedy.' This is his attempt to transliterate the Kanarese *Kaḷaḷe Diḍḍi* or *Kaḷaḷe* wicket-gate, so-called after *Kalale* near Mysore which is the ancestral village of the Mysore hereditary commanders-in-chief or *Dalavāyis*. This gateway had been blocked up by Tippu, and chambers were formed inside for his use. Outside he pitched four small huts for his servants. Here he was dining at midday on May 4th, when the fatal news of the assault was brought to him. This gateway I take to be the second at which one arrives in

walking along the northern rampart from the north-west angle. The first is the Delhi gate, leading to the old Delhi bridge, of which the site is still marked by the line of stepping stones. The second gate answers all the requirements of the case. If therefore the destroyer has taken from us the gloomy arch beneath which Tippu expired, we may be thankful that there is still preserved the recessed gateway in which he took his last meal, when he rose and buckled on his sword, and from which he went forth to stem the torrent of his foes.

Lastly, does not the Lal Bagh merit a little more consideration by the visitors? Here Tippu had made himself a pleasant garden and built the best of his palaces. It was unfortunately, like nearly all the buildings in Seringapatam, erected of perishable and poor materials. The pleasure was destroyed by the siege operations of 1792, all the fruit and cyprus trees being cut down to form bastions and fascines for the batteries; while after 1799 the palace was occupied by the first British Resident, Colonel Close; being repaired and set in order by his friend Arthur Wellesley. Then it was abandoned and allowed to crumble into dust. To-day there is little to be seen except the overturned pillars of the Lal Bagh gateway, just beyond Baillie's monument, and a mound of earth and brick huts in the midst of the rice fields; but a visit to the eastern water's meet or sangama repays the visitor by its beauty and repose. This island of Seringapatam bears to the west a front like the bones of some ancient and battered ship of war, still eloquent in ruin of bloodshed and destruction; but at its eastern extremity nature lays the balm of peace on the fretted and too passionate spirit of man.

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## GOLD IN ANCIENT INDIA.

*A paper read before the Mythic Society.*

BY MR. A. MERRYIN—SMITH.

It is a subject of much speculation among those who have made a study of the history of Ancient India, whence came the enormous quantities of gold stated to have been found there, in the very earliest times. The early classical writers make frequent reference to Indian Gold. In the Rig Veda, Brahmanas, the great Epics (Mahabharata and Ramayana) Sutras, and Puranas; in the Hebrew Scriptures; in the writings of Herodotus, Megasthenes, Ptolemy, Strabo, Pliny and of many others we have mention made of gold in India. The following are a few of the descriptions taken from the above authorities, and arranged in rough chronological order.

The earliest mention of gold in India occurs in the "Rig Veda," the oldest of the Aryan sacred books. These date back as early as  
 B. C. 2000.                      B. C. 2000.

In book 2, hymn 34, mention is made of golden helmets, and horses with trappings of gold captured from the Simyus, a yellow race inhabiting Kashmir.

In book 5, hymn 54, golden anklets and golden crowns are spoken of; while in book 6, coins of gold are apparently alluded to, as we are told of presents to Rhishis of one-hundred pieces of gold.

In the war between the Pandus and Kurus described in the "Mahabharata," numerous allusions are made to gold in enormous quantities. The palace of Yudhisthira, the eldest of the Pandu brothers, is thus described:—"This spacious and splendid palace contained a throne of gold studded with gems, Maya decorated the palace with lotus plants of gold, and in the court were chambers some filled with gems and some with gold."

In the Ramayana we are told that Rama's capital, Ayodhya (Oudh) contained palaces of gold. During his expedition to Lunka  
 B. C. 1200.                      (Ceylon) to recover Sita who had been carried off by Ravana, the King of that Island, he was opposed by Vali, a powerful non-Aryan King, who reigned over a country now identified with Mysore, whom he conquered and slew, and in whose dominions he obtained enormous wealth in gold, exceeding anything to be found in Kosala.

Sugriva the brother of Vali, made an alliance with Rama and helped him in his war with Ravana, with a mighty army under the command of Hanumat, his great General. Sugriva's wealth in gold is said to have been boundless.

The Hebrew Scriptures tell us that King David collected vast treasure in gold for the building of the temple at Jerusalem.

B. C. 1050.

Napier in his *Metallurgy of the Bible* estimated the accumulations of King David, derived chiefly from trade with Ophir (S. India), at 640 millions of gold. And some idea of the abundance of gold to be found among these non-Aryan nations of S. India in B. C. 1000 can be formed when it is known that the yield of all the gold mines in the world for the last year was 70 millions sterling, yet the ships of Tarshish took to King David more than nine times that amount from South India. Ophir is mentioned in the Bible in the "Book of Job," in "Kings" and "Chronicles," in the "Psalms" and in "Isaiah" and always associated with gold. In "Isaiah" xii, 13, we have the singular expression "the golden wedge of Ophir." This is thought to mean the wedge shaped ingots into which gold obtained from quartz reefs is cast. This was probably the *Electrum* of Herodotus. David's son, King Solomon, built a special navy in the Red Sea to trade with Ophir, and these ships brought him as much as 420 talents of gold in a single voyage.

So great was the treasure that he accumulated that the Bible says he made gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones (2nd Chron. i., 15). Max Müller, among others, identifies the Ophir of Scripture with S. India, and he argues that no other country west of India produces ivory, apes, gold, peacocks and almug trees (sandalwood), all of which are common on the Malabar Coast. And he also draws attention to the fact that the word signifying "peacock" in the Scripture is not of Hebrew origin, but it is identical with the Tamil name for that bird (*thokai*); that peacocks were actually carried from India to the west we learn from the *Bavaru Jataka*, translated by Professor Rhys David.

It should be carefully noted that the ships of Tarshish visited the Malabar Coast 1000 B. C., that is 500 years before the invasion and conquest of S. India by the Aryans, thus proving that a civilized people, who were not Aryans, inhabited this part of India at that time.

Darius, the Persian who conquered a portion of India, obtained an annual tribute of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions of gold from thence, and Herodotus specially notes that the other nineteen Satrapies paid their tribute in silver, while India paid hers in gold. Much of this gold was in ingots, to

B. C. 480.

which he gave the name "Electrum" and Mr. Head calculates that the Electrum of the ancients consisted of 73% of gold and 37% of silver, or what would be known in the present day as eighteen carat gold. It is singular that all the gold obtained from the quartz veins in S. India is mixed with silver in nearly the same proportions as the Electrum of the ancients. Very probably by "Electrum" was meant gold obtained from quartz veins, to distinguish it from gold dust obtained from the sands of rivers, which is of a richer colour and contains a higher percentage of gold.

He also makes mention of the myth of the gold digging ants (Thalia 3. 102-5.) "But there are other Indians at no great distance from the city of Caspatyrus (Kashmir). They lie north of the rest of the Indians and resemble closely in their mode of life the Bactrian people. These are the most warlike of Indians, and are the people that are sent to procure the gold. In the vicinity of their territory, the land is desert, being covered with sand; in these sandy tracts accordingly are found pismires of a size between the dog and the fox, specimens of which are to be seen in the menagerie of the Persian King, which have been caught and imported from that country. These pismires accordingly burrow underground and in excavating their habitation throw up hills of sand, just the same and in the same manner as the ants do in Hellas; they are likewise very similar to our own pismires; the sand that they throw up contains abundance of gold dust. For the purpose of collecting this sand therefore the Indians are despatched to the desert. Each man harnesses together three camels, two males fastened by traces on the off and near sides, and one female in the middle, the Indian rides the female camel, taking care to choose one that has lately dropped her young; for their female camels are not inferior in speed to the horse and besides are stronger and much better adapted to carry burdens. The Indians therefore, provided each with a yoke of the above kind, proceed in quest of the gold, having arranged so as to be able to commence collecting the sand at the time when the sun is most violent, because during the parching heat the pismires keep out of sight underground. When the Indians are come to the proper place, they fill with sand the leather bags they have brought with them and then retire at the most rapid pace they can, for the pismires, according to the Persians, detect strangers by the smell, and forthwith enter upon a pursuit; the fleetness of the camels exceeds that of all other animals, for if the Indians did not get a good way ahead of the pismires, while those animals are collecting, not one of the men would escape. They add, that the male camels would not only flag, being inferior in velocity to the female but would not pull together, while the female mindful of the young she has left, does not allow the males to tarry behind. Such, according to the Persians, is the manner in which the

Indians obtain most of their gold ; the other sort of gold is not so abundant and is dug up in the country."

This fable of the gold digging ants is mentioned by Herodotus, Strabo, Megasthenes, Aryan, Ktesias, Photios and other ancient writers, and the tradition was also mentioned in writings in the middle ages by Arabian authors and by the Turks.

Pliny states that a horn of this Indian ant was preserved in the temple of Hercules at Erythral. This fable of the gold digging ant has been the subject of much learned discussion, and was only recently satisfactorily explained by the report of a Hindu member of the Geological Survey of India, deputed to examine the Tibetan gold fields along the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra. He describes a whole string of gold fields extending all the way from Lhassa to Rudok.

At the Miners' camp at Thok Jarlung, 16,300 feet above sea-level, the cold is intense and the miners in winter are thickly clad with furs. They do not merely remain underground when at work, but their small black tents, which are made of a felt-like material manufactured from the hair of the yak, are set in a series of pits with steps leading down to them 7 or 8 feet below the surface of the ground. The diggers prefer working in the winter as the frozen soil then stands well and is not likely to trouble them much by falling in. The miners use a pick made of sheep's horn tipped with iron and with wooden handles. Sir Henry Rawlinson commenting on this report says:—"It is probable that the search for gold in this region has been going on from a very remote antiquity, since no one can read the Pundit's account of Tibetan miners living in tents, some 7 or 8 feet below the surface of the ground and collecting the excavated earth in heaps, previous to washing the gold out of the soil, without being reminded of the description which Herodotus gives of the ants in the lands of the Indians which made their dwellings underground and threw up sand-heaps as they burrowed, the sand which they threw up being full of gold."

Fredric Schiern, Professor of History at the University of Copenhagen, who writes independently of Sir Henry Rawlinson, is able to clear up a mystery which has been a puzzle to Historians and Philosophers for more than two thousand years.

He says:—"For us the story partakes no longer of the marvellous. The gold digging ants were originally neither real ants as the ancients supposed, nor as many eminent men of learning have supposed, larger animals mistaken for ants on account of their subterranean habits, but men of flesh and blood, and these men Tibetan miners whose mode of life and dress were in the remotest antiquity exactly what they are at the present day."



He further mentions that the horn of the ant, seen by Pliny in the temple of Hercules at Erythral, was probably a sheep's horn used by the Tibetan miners as a mining pick for digging out the soil.

Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador at the Court of Chandragupta, who has left us one of the best accounts of the manners and customs of the Hindus of his time, living in the Gangetic valley, mentions that there were mines of gold in the country of the Dardse. Speaking of the soil of India he says, it has under ground numerous veins of gold and silver.

There is a well-known Buddhist legend of the purchase of a garden at Sravasti where the owner, Prince Yota, demanded as its price that the purchaser should cover the whole surface with gold coins touching each other. This condition is said to have been fulfilled, and the value of the gold coins has been computed at 16 millions sterling.

A sculpture in a temple at Gaya represents the square gold coins being placed edge to edge so as to cover the whole garden.

There are numerous passages in the "Asoka Avadanee" describing the power and the wealth of the great Emperor Asoka, the author of the famous 14 Edicts. When he conquered the great Kingdom of Kalinga, stretching from the Ganges to the Kistña, he is said to have slaughtered a hundred thousand of that nation and carried off 100,000 prisoners and 5,000 elephants, loaded with gold.

Pliny tells us of mines of gold in the country of the Narae (Nairs) in Malabar.

Of the wealth of Vikramaditya of Ojien we have ample testimony in the classical works of the nine gems (Navaratnam) Kalidasa, Amara Sindh and seven others.

Coming to more recent times historians tell us of the enormous wealth carried off by Mahomed of Ghazni in his ten expeditions to India. In his tenth and most famous expedition he captured and destroyed the famous fortified temple of Somnath in Guzerat and carried off 12 millions sterling in gold.

At the capture of Devara Samudra (Halebid in Mysore) Malik Kafur, the Mohammedan General, obtained gold to the value of 400 millions sterling.

I think it will be seen from what I have just read that gold must have been exceedingly abundant in ancient India. But what strikes one as very singular is that so little mention is made of whence the inhabitants obtained their gold. Was it by trade or was it from mines?

Sometime ago I wrote to a Hindu friend in Calcutta, Raja Surindro Mohun Tagore—a profound Sanskrit scholar, and asked if he could give me any information from ancient Sanskrit literature of the occurrence of gold mines in India. He replied that gold in fabulous quantities was mentioned in all of the early Sanskrit books, and so common was gold that there are no less than 13 synonyms in Sanskrit denoting gold. He was not aware that gold-mining was mentioned, and indeed the only incident that could be called mining, was related in the Mahabharata. The Pandu brothers made a subterraneous passage, by which they and their mother escaped from the palace of lac in which they had been imprisoned by Duryodhana and which was set on fire by the emissaries of that king, in the hope of destroying the Pandus.

It is believed that a civilization much more ancient than that of the Aryans' existed in this country long before the Aryan invasion of the Punjab (B. C. 2000).

The Kolarian race (Mongols) had many powerful kingdoms along the southern slopes of the Himalayas from Cashmere to Chittagong; in the Gangetic valley; in Central India, and even as far south as the Kistna. We have remnants of this race in the Kashmirees, Nepaulees, Bhootias, the Sonthals, Kols, Bowrees, the Gonds and Khonds. Of the Dravidian race we see examples in the Telugus, Tamils, Canarese, and Cingalese of South India.

Mr. Richards in his paper on 'Caste in South India' has shown that of the 35 millions of inhabitants of the Madras Presidency 33 millions are Sudras, or the conquered race; and only two millions of the dominant Aryan race. The bulk of the 33 millions of Sudras are of Dravidian origin.

Mr. V. N. Narsimaiengar, late Census Commissioner of Mysore, in his report shows there is even a smaller proportion of the Aryan element, the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vyasias amounting to only 5 percent of the population of these highlands. Grierson, Risley, and Thurston have also shown that the Aryan race forms but a small proportion of the 300 millions of people inhabiting India in the present day.

The physical features of the country are such as to warrant the assumption that here the human race multiplied and flourished and that a high state of civilization existed in very early times.

Buckle, in his *History of Civilization*, lays it down as an axiom that in the valleys of the great rivers, where the soil is fertile and food easily obtained, there the population is great and the arts flourish. He instances his argument by directing attention to the valley of the Nile, the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates; the valley of the Ganges and that of the great rivers of China. In no part of the world are the conditions required for the support of an immense population to be found in greater perfection than on the East Coast of India. The great rivers, Irrawaddy, Brahmaputra, Ganges, Brahmani, Mahanadi, Godavery, Kistna, Kaveri and numerous smaller streams water a region the most fertile in the world, and whereby "tickling the soil with the plough, she smiles with the harvest."

In such a country then it would not be wrong to look for the earliest seat of civilization. The first metal mentioned in the Bible is gold, in the 2nd chapter of Genesis we are told that out of Eden there went a river which divided into four branches and one of these, the Pison, compassed the land of Havilah where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good. Gold seems to be one of the earliest metals in use amongst civilized people.

Gold jewellery has been found in the ruins of ancient cities in Egypt whose history dates back B. C. 3000 and also in Assyria and Chaldea.

When the Aryans invaded and settled down in the Punjab they found that the powerful nations of the Dasyas (black races of the five rivers) the Simyus (yellow races of Kashmir) and the Pischachis (red race inhabiting the country of the Thara or great desert) had gold in abundance.

I have stated that gold in enormous quantities was found in South India and along the East Coast (Kalinga). An examination of the Geological map recently published by the Government of India will show that an almost unbroken line of gold bearing rocks extends along the East Coast of the Peninsula from Comorin to Assam. A chain of low hills called the Eastern Ghauts rises about 200 miles inland and runs parallel with the coast for nearly the whole of this distance. The rocks composing these hills have yielded most of the famous historical diamonds.

The famous Kolar Gold Fields, which yield nearly two millions of gold annually, make but a small section of the Dharwar or gold bearing rocks found on these hills.

Copper, lead, tin, antimony, plumbago are also found, while evidence of mining in the shape of old shafts, some as much as 690 feet deep, are seen scattered along the whole extent of the Eastern Ghauts, and yet we have not

the slightest information as to who dug these mines and when this flourishing industry existed. Surely it is a fit subject for such a society as this to investigate the various myths and legends which are still current as to the people who were such skilful miners, so long ago.

In the "Arabian Nights" we have a storehouse of Myths, most of them of Indian origin. The voyages of Sinbad the sailor are narratives of travel clothed in the language of exaggeration. His description of elephant-hunting, in the island of Serendib (Ceylon), is a fairly accurate account of how the natives obtain their ivory even in the present day. He gives a very good account of the Parsees and their Towers of Silence in Bombay in another of his voyages, and there is much that is correct in his fanciful tale of the manner in which the Indians obtain their diamonds. The diamonds he says are found in the deep valleys of high mountains much infested with venomous serpents. The merchants are afraid to descend to the valleys where the diamonds are found, owing to their dread of the serpents, so they get large pieces of raw meat which they fling into the valley. The eagles which build their nests in the cliffs swoop down on the meat and carry it off to their nests to feed their young. The merchants drive away the eagles and secure the diamonds which they find adhering to the meat. A drive along the bund of the Ulsur tank any evening will give a clue to this seemingly absurd tale. There you will see Hindus throwing pieces of meat into the air if they see a brahmin kite (Garadu) anywhere about. If the kite swoop down and carry off the meat then the thrower will obtain his wish. Sinbad's diamond mountains have been identified with the Nulleemallies, a portion of the Eastern Ghauts near Nandial. Here are the famous diamond mines of Banganpully. The deep gorges of the Nullamulays are infested by the dreaded king-cobra, the most terrible of the serpent family. When the diamond miners have selected a spot on which to begin mining they sacrifice a young buffalo and throw pieces of flesh into the air. The large numbers of garadu or brahmin kite (brown kite with white head regarded as sacred by the Hindus) attracted by the scent of blood hover about. If one of these birds swoops down and carries off a piece of flesh then the thrower will be lucky in his mining. Is not this practice an explanation of Sinbad's fanciful narrative?

In Orissa and Chota-Nagpur the extensive copper mines and gold mines, the remains of which are to be seen, are ascribed to a giant race called Saraks who had two tongues. Probably these were foreigners who spoke two languages.

It would help us in this investigation if we remember that in India customs and habits are immutable. Like the river of the poet, "Kings may come and Kings may go, but custom goes on for ever." The goldsmiths of the present day are the descendants of the goldsmiths who practised their handicraft many thousand years ago. I have already quoted an example of this immutability of profession in the habits of the miners of Tibet, who mined for gold two thousand five hundred years ago in exactly the same way as their descendants do in the present day. The gold washers of Chota-Nagpur are the Joras, a Kolarian tribe ; the Bowrees and Sonthals who work the coal mines are also Kolarians ; the Tibetans and Kashmeeris who mine along the Himalayan foot hills are also of Kolarian origin and, it is believed, that the copper workers all over India are of the same race.

Perhaps a description of how the natives mine for gold in the present day would not be out of place. In Bangalore we daily see enormous quantities of building-stone brought in from the adjacent quarries. A visit to one of these quarries will show how the natives work and how different are their methods to granite quarrying in Europe. The quarry adjacent to the glass-house in the Lal Bagh is a good illustration. Occasionally of an evening you will see an experienced miner, generally an old man, starting work. He begins on a slab at the deepest part of the quarry. Here he kindles a small fire of a few logs. He shifts this fire horizontally along the bottom of the slab. The heat distributed along this line causes the rock to scale off in a sheet. The thickness of the sheet can be regulated to a nicety by the length of time the fire is allowed to remain in one place. When a thin slab is required the fire is moved more quickly than when a thick slab is required. The miner has a small hammer with which he taps the rock and by the sound he judges of the thickness of the slab and the length of the scale. He then begins to push his fire upwards along the slab so as to prolong the fissure and he helps this by introducing wedges of soft iron along the lower edge of the fissure. In the course of the night he thus peels off a layer of rock many yards square. In the morning the other members of the gang turn up and break up the slab into sizeable pieces fit for building purposes. It is said that a skilful burner will obtain 32 cart-loads of building stone from a single cart-load of firewood.

In mining for gold the preliminary steps are somewhat the same. By long experience the natives know that gold is only found in quartz veins traversing slaty rocks. A party of gold miners carefully test by washing the earth adjacent to a quartz reef. When they light on a spot where gold dust is freely obtained they know that this dust must have come from the quartz reef and so they carefully search it for signs of gold. If these are

found then a party of about 20 or 30 men, women and children, proceed to dig away the earth on each side of the reef for a length of about 300 feet. The slates in which the quartz reefs occur are generally softened by weather action to a depth of about 20 or 30 feet. All this soft earth is dug away so that in time a pit 300 feet long, 20 feet wide and as many deep is excavated; along the centre of this pit runs the quartz reef. A fire is kindled on the quartz at one end and is gradually worked back along the whole surface of reef exposed. This burning is very gradual and may take weeks to accomplish. But the miners do not wait till the whole surface of the exposed reef is burned. When the portion first burned is sufficiently cooled, they attack it with crow bars, picks and wedges. The firing causes a number of cracks to appear in the quartz and into these cracks the wedges are driven and great blocks of rock are quarried out. These are broken up by means of rounded boulders of black rock (trap) and brought to surface. There the quartz is broken into small pieces about the size of wallnuts and these pieces are dipped in water and searched over by boys and girls. All pieces showing the minutest speck of gold are placed on one side for further treatment. When a sufficient quantity is collected the quartz is ground to a fine powder by the women and then washed in wooden dishes. The gold from its great specific gravity goes to the bottom of the dish and is easily recovered. The Rajah or Chieftain who owns the soil has his official present to take one-third of all the gold produced as his master's share. The burning of the reef not only enables the miner to quarry out great blocks, but it also makes the quartz very friable so that it is easily broken up and powdered. From actual test I have found that a man can crush in powder 11 lbs. of quartz in a day of eight hours. If the quartz is burned he can crush up 50 lbs. By burning also the native miner gets rid of the pyrites (converts them into oxides) which is so troublesome to the European miner, and further the fire he kindles in the bottom of the mine evaporates the water and enables him to go down to depths of 690 feet. In exceptionally wet weather, when large quantities of water finds its way into the mine, a number of women, standing on staging about 5 feet above one another, lift the water out in earthen pots, and it is astonishing the quantity of water that can be taken out in this way. The native miners know the uses of mercury. He carries a little of this in a cocoon of the tusser silk worm. The hole by which the moth escaped is plugged with wax and in this wax he makes a small hole with a babul thorn and by shaking the cocoon, he can get out a very tiny quantity of mercury which he rubs into the gold dust and thus forms an amalgam. This amalgam he puts into a damp rag which he squeezes to get rid of the superfluous mercury. He then burns the rag over a light and gets a small pellet of sponge gold. He scrapes a hole in a piece of charcoal, puts in his

pellet of gold, which he covers with borax and blows on it through a bamboo blow stick, until the gold melts and he has a button of gold. He also understands the method of purifying gold, that is, extracting from it the silver with which quartz gold is always mixed. He hammers into the gold button into a sheet. He then plasters both sides of it with salt and puts it between two cowdung cakes (Varatti) and burns it. He repeats this process three or four times and the pellet loses a portion of its weight and yields gold that is almost pure. If we examine this process by the light of our own knowledge of metallurgy we find that in a crude way this is exactly the process we adopt. The salt (chloride of sodium) gives off chlorine, which attacks the silver in the plate of beaten metal. The chloride of silver is in its turn absorbed by the cowdung ashes, which act as a cupel, and thus the illiterate Hindu miner adopts methods which cannot be improved upon by modern science. Now it is a question who taught these rude men this process of refining gold. Sir Thomas Holland tells us that the iron miners of the Kollamallies and other hills of Salem manufactured steel from iron by the Bessemer method long before its discovery by that eminent scientist. They also knew of manganese steel and chrome steel. It is singular that the steel works at Mathod and Gangur in Mysore are adjacent to Manganese deposits.

Ethnologists believe that the Kolarian race entered India from the North-East along the valley of the Brahmaputra, and being a people accustomed to live in the hilly tracts of East Central Asia they naturally knew of the products of mountain regions, and were probably the miners of ancient India. We have no evidence that the Aryans ever took to mining, and certainly in the present day very few of this race in India are miners. The Dravidians were prominently a seafaring race, they were noted pirates and their ships scoured the Indian Ocean and they formed settlements in lower Burmah (the country of the Telangs) Sumatra, Java, and other Islands of the Indian Archipelago, and their large ships, with a crew of two hundred men, even visited China, according to Fa-Hien.

I was present at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in London some years ago when Sir Theodore Bent read a paper on the ancient cities of Mashonaland. I was much struck with what he said as to old gold mines around Zimbawee which, from his description, seemed to be precisely similar to those seen all over Mysore and on the East Coast. After the meeting I had some conversation with Sir Theodore Bent and he told me that the Mashonas called themselves the Maha-Kalingas or great Kalingas. We know that Kalinga or Telingana was a great maritime kingdom extending from the mouth of the Ganges to that of the Krishna, before the time of Asoka the



Great, B. C. 250. Many of the numerals in Telugu and the language of the Maha-Kalingas are precisely the same, and in manners and customs too there is a close resemblance. He thought that the Maha-Kalingas had their ancestral home in Abyssinia, and that they colonised various parts of the East Coast of Africa. May not some of these people have found their way across the Arabian sea and settled in fertile India? We know that in appearance the Tamils closely resemble the Abyssinians.

The Hebrew scriptures tell us that the Queen of Sheba presented Solomon with "spices of a very great store and precious stones; and there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon."

Since Abyssinia produces neither spices nor precious stones; whence then did this Queen obtain her store? South India, or the country of the Dravidians, is noted for its spices, pearls and diamonds.

The Sappers and Miners from Bangalore took part in the Magdala expedition, and on their return the native sappers brought with them many of the head dresses and ornaments used by the Abyssinians in their theatrical entertainments, and these are exactly like those worn by the Tamils, in their Natagams (theatricals). I have mentioned these little similarities in manners and customs in such widely separated nations as the Tamils and Telugus, the Mashonas (Maha-Kalingas, and the Abyssinians, with the hope that some members of this society, with more leisure and more ability, might be able to clear up the mystery which envelopes the history of gold mining in Ancient India.

#### CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTES RELATING TO THE ABOVE PAPER ON GOLD MINING IN ANCIENT INDIA.\*

BANGALORE,  
23rd March, 1910.

SIR,

Concerning Mr. Mervyn-Smith's lecture last night and the subsequent discussion:—

I knew one of the authorities on the subject of Zimbabw and the Elliptical Temple there, Mr. "Matabele" Thompson. He told me that it was thought that the gold was worked under the Egyptians or the Jews.

These people used to coast down the E. Coast of Africa to a place called Quilemane. It took them about 3 months to get there as they had to stop all down the coast for water, provisions, etc. From Quilemane it took them 3 weeks inland travel to get to Zimbabw.

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\* Additional notes on this subject have been received too late for insertion in this issue, they will appear in No. 4.—Ed.



The manual labour of getting the gold was done by the Mashonas, who were probably enslaved by the Zimbabw people. All the more expert work of refining the gold was done by these foreigners. It is very likely that these men were specially imported or enslaved from Southern India and the fact that some Jew words are common to them and to the Mashonas points to this.

Again in the Elliptical Temple were found "Kites" cut in Soapstone. I believe the Egyptians and the Hindus both held these birds in veneration.

The Mashonas know all the story of King Solomon and his judgment and say it came from the North. When they want to call a man brave or generous they say "Oh mother of a man!" referring to Solomon's judgment.

The opinion of "Matabele" Thompson is that the workers at Zimbabw were in Solomon's employ.

Yours truly,  
GEORGE H. STEVENSON.

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I have been listening, with not a small amount of wonder, at the grasp that Mr. Mervyn-Smith has shown in treating the subject of gold mining in ancient India so fully, and from the remote Rig Vedic times. I was somewhat surprised, however, that in his interesting discourse he has passed over one important source of information on the subject. I mean the Arthasāstra of Kautilya. This author was a contemporary of the Megasthenes referred to in the lecture, and but a generation removed from Aristotle, the father of Political Science, of which this work treats. One of the sources of the great wealth of gold ascribed to India was no doubt the dust washed down by the rivers. The Greeks, including Megasthenes, called the modern river Son, "Herannabades," the Sanskrit equivalent of which is Suvarnavāha (carrier of gold). Apart from this the work makes it quite clear that there was a regular mining department under the control of the Government of the time. Book II, chapter 12, of the said work lays down rules, etc., for the starting of mining operations, and refers to a Superintendent of mines and experts in mineralogy. Among the minerals worked are mentioned gold, silver, copper, lead, tin, and mercury.

The reference to old abandoned mines in the course of this chapter is very interesting indeed. With your permission I shall read to you one or two paras. of a translation by Mr. Sama Sastri of the Mysore Government Oriental Library.

### *The Starting of Mining Operations.*

"Possessed of knowledge of the sciences dealing with copper and other minerals, experienced in the art of distillation and condensation of mercury and of testing gems, aided by experts in mineralogy and equipped with mining labourers and necessary instruments, the Superintendent of mines shall examine mines which, on account of their containing mineral excrements, crucibles, charcoal and ashes, may appear to have been once exploited; or which may be newly discovered on plains or mountain-slopes possessing mineral ores the richness of which can be ascertained by weight, depth of colour, piercing, smell, and taste."

### *Gold Ores Float Gold.*

"Liquids which ooze out from pits, caves, slopes, or deep excavations of well-known mountains; which have the colour of the rose-apple, of mango, and of fan-palm; which are as yellow as turmeric, sulphurate of arsenic, honey-comb, and vermilion; which are as resplendent as the petals of a lotus, or the feathers of a parrot or a peacock; which are adjacent to any mass of water or shrubs of a similar colour; which are greasy, transparent and very heavy, are ores of gold. Likewise liquids which when dropped on water, spread like oil, to which dirt and filth adhere, and which amalgamate themselves more than cent. per cent. with copper or silver."

"Those ores which are obtained from plains or slopes of mountains; which are either yellow, or as red as copper, or reddish yellow; which are disjoined and marked with blue lines; which have the colour of black beans, green beans, and sesamum; which are marked with spots like a drop of curd and resplendent as turmeric, the petals of a lotus, aquatic plant, the liver or the spleen which possess a sandy layer within them and are marked with figures of a circle or svastika; which contain globular masses; and which when roasted do not split, but emit much foam and smoke, are the ores of gold, and are used to form amalgams with copper or silver."

### *Treatment of Ores.*

"The heavier the ores, the greater will be the quantity of metal in them. The impurities of ores, whether superficial or inseparably combined with them, can be got rid of and the metal melted when the ores are chemically treated with *tikṣhṇa* (red oxide of mercury); urine and alkalies, and are mixed or smeared over with the mixture of (the powder of) *rajavrikṣha* (*clitorea ternatea*), *vaṭa* (*figus indicus*) and *pelu* (*carnea arborea*), together with cow's bile and the urine and dung of a buffalo, an ass and an elephant."

Then follows certain instructions as to how to make metals soft. There are five different varieties of gold specifically noted each with its characteristic name derived from the locality of its find. There is a class of it referred to as 'mine gold' which is impure. There are ten kinds of revenue mentioned as due to the king from the mines. There is mention of a Superintendent of marine mines.

The work being one on statecraft written by a statesman who was responsible for the establishment of the first historical Empire in India, deserves careful study, and these facts taken therefrom cannot be considered products of the imagination.

S. KRISHNASAWMI AIYANGAR.

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### NOTE ON THE BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO GOLD.

It is noteworthy that, when the Israelites conquered Canaan, very slight mention is made of gold as forming part of the spoil. In their two wars with Midian, on the other hand, under Moses and Gideon, emphasis is laid on the vast quantities of gold captured; and it is explained that each of the Midianites were carrying of gold, that their chieftains wore also crescents and pendants of gold, and that there were golden chains even on the necks of the camels (Judges viii., 24-27; see also Num. xxxi., 50-54). This seems to indicate that the gold was obtained from the mines of Midian, on the East of the Gulf of Akaba. Abundant old workings exist there; the late Sir Richard Burton tried to explore their extent, but his researches were stopped by the Bedouin.

Further proof that the peninsula of Arabia was an important source of gold is found in the fact that the Queen of Sheba brought Solomon "very much gold" (I Kings x., 2), Midian and Sheba are mentioned together as famous sources of gold in Isaiah lx., 6. Sheba was the name of a wealthy people occupying S.-W. Arabia, and famous for gold, precious stones and frankincense. Their capital, Saba or Manaba, is 200 miles north of Aden. The country has hitherto been all but closed against exploration, but it abounds in ancient inscriptions which are likely to throw much light on early Semitic history. Such inscriptions as are already known speak of a lavish use of gold.

King Solomon's ships brought gold, along with precious stones, alnum trees (probably sandal wood), ivory (perhaps also ebony), apes and peacocks from Ophir, once every three years (I Kings x., 28; x., 11, 22); and the gold of Ophir is elsewhere alluded to on account of its fineness. Ophir, according to Gen. x., 29, was in S.-E. Arabia; and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it is natural to suppose that this was the Ophir of Solomon. A voyage from Eziongeber to the Persian Gulf and back under ancient conditions would take about three years. Having no mariners' compass, ships were obliged to hug the shore, and in inclement seasons to make long halts. It was not until the first century A. D. that direct navigation from the South end of the Red Sea to the Malabar coast was attempted. A Greek mariner named Hippalos was the first to trust himself to the regularity of the monsoon winds, and to make the direct voyage.

There is no evidence that all the articles brought in Solomon's ships were the productions of one place. It is much more probable that Ophir was the name of the *emporium* where they were collected from many sources and distributed.

The peacocks certainly came from the Malabar coast, it being now generally admitted that the Hebrew *tukki* is the Tamil *tokai* or *togai*, now used to denote the tail of the peacock, but formerly denoting the peacock itself. Other instances of Dravidian names used in distant countries are *Areca* from the Kanarese *adika*, and *rice* (Greek *ῥυζα*) from the Tamil *arici*. The alnum was in all probability the sandalwood (perhaps the Sanskrit *valguka*); if so, it also came from the Malabar coast. The monkey may also have come from some part of India, as nothing has been found so near the Hebrew name *qof* as the Sanskrit *kapi*. So that there is no doubt that Western India was one of the sources of the articles imported by Solomon.

But with regard to gold the evidence in favour of India is not so strong. Gold is a very widely distributed metal, and is found in larger or smaller quantities in many lands. It probably was collected from various sources. No evidence has been put forward to show that the output of gold in Southern India in ancient times was anything like sufficient to make it the chief source of the gold which Solomon obtained. More might be said for N.-W. India, because we know from Herodotus (III, 94) that Darius' Indian satrapy, which bordered on Kashmir and Afghanistan, paid a very rich tribute, which was largely in gold dust. But this gold seems to have come from Dardistan, the scene of the gold digging 'ants' (Herodotus III, 98, 102-105; Strabo XV, 705; Pliny II, 31). Herodotus expressly saying that only some small quantity was dug in the country (III, 105). Only a little gold is likely to have come from this source into the hands of Solomon's merchants either at the mouth of the Indus or at the port of Barugaza (Broach). A much better case has, I think, been made out in favour of Mashonaland. The ruins at Zimbabwe are said to be manifestly Phœnician. The Portuguese in 1506 found near Sofala two Arab boats in the very act of removing a cargo of gold.

All the conditions of the problem are best met by supposing that Ophir was the *distributing centre* for articles of small bulk and great value collected from distant quarters, and that this centre was in South or South-East Arabia.

Further light is thrown on the subject from the Egyptian monuments. In the eighteenth dynasty, 400 years before Solomon's time, while the Israelites were settled in Goshen, Queen Hatshepsu I, sister of Thothmes II, sent ships to the land of Punt, which brought back cargoes very much resembling those of Solomon. The paintings at Daisel Bahri, Thebes, depict with great vividness the landing of the ships, and the scene is like that at a great entrepôt. Strings of coolies are carrying on board sacks of frankincense and myrrh, elephants' tusks, ebony, ostrich feathers and ostrich eggs. Gold also formed part of the cargo: While apes are running about the rigging, and the giraffe appears in the landscape. The Land of Punt is supposed to include both sides of the Gulf of Aden; S. Arabia being the great source of frankincense, and most of the products, including gold dust from the interior, being still obtainable at Berbera on the Somali coast. This traffic had been going on long before Queen Hatshepsu's time.

# HISTORICAL AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES\*.

BY S. KRISHNASAWMI AIYANGAR.

1. Among the discoveries at Archæological explorations for the year 1908-1909 there was an interesting inscription in Asoka characters upon a pillar standing near a mound at Bisanagar (supposed to be identical with ancient Vidisa) in the State of Gwalior. The interest of the find lies in this, that the Memorial is of Garuḍathwaja, set up in honour of Vasudeva by Heliodoss, the son of Dion, a Bhagavata who came from Taxila in the reign of the great King Antaleidas.

2. A yet more important discovery was the digging up of the ruins of the great stupa containing the relics of Buddha at Peshawar. Dr. Spooner was fortunate in excavating and laying bare the great ground plan of the great stupa so well described to us by Yuvan Chwung; and what was more than this, his discovery of the casket intact containing the valued relics of the Buddha. In the frieze on the outer surface of the casket is a scroll containing the representation of Kanishka himself familiar to numismatists. The Khanishti inscriptions clear all doubt regarding the identity of the King. In addition to the mention of the name of Kanishka, there is another person named as the overseer of the Kanishka vihāra in the Mahāsēna Sangarāma. Agisala probably was a Greek and if the 'dasa' that precedes the name is to be taken in the literal sense, he might have been a slave (or a mere servant.)

3. Even this discovery does not take us any nearer to our knowing the date of Kanishka. Dr. Fleet holds out for 57 B. C. V. A. Smith and others for a date about 125 A. D. Dr. Bhandarkar a still later. In regard to this first date there appears after all to have been a Vikramaditya of Malva, who was the originator of the Era. Prof. Vaidya points out in an article he contributes to the *Indian Review*, (for December 1909), that there is a verse in the Maharashtr's poem Saptasati ascribed to the Sātavāhana King Hāla 78 A.D., which clearly refers to a Vikramaditya of Malva. A Vikramaditya-Vishama Śila is mentioned in the Kathāsarithsāgara, who got rid of a great *Mlechcha* trouble. This last work is so much under trial now for its claim to be a translation of the Brihat Katha, that it would be hazardous to call it in evidence upon such an interesting enquiry in which doctors are at great variance yet.

4. At Hihola, Badami and Pattadakal, all in the Bijapur District, temples and buildings are in existence, both above and below ground, that form links between the cave architecture and that of the mediæval temples.

5. At Tirukklaukkupram in Chingleput District was found in a cave a damaged Tamil inscription referring to a gift made to the temple in the reign at Vātapigonda Narasingapotharaiyar, the Pallava Narasimhavarman (seventh century A.D.). This ruler is mentioned among the former rulers who continued the grants made to the Temple in an inscription of the Chola King Rajakesarivarmen.

6. Mr. R. A. Narasimhachar's report of archæological work for the year ending 30th June 1909 is an interesting record of work done during the year. I shall notice the salient features of it in a later issue.

## PUBLIC FESTIVALS.

### The 'Yokli' Festival.

In every country, people have a way of signalling the close of the calendar year, and of welcoming the advent of the new. For the majority of persons in the Mysore State the 'Yugadi' festival marks the commencement of the new year. At that time among the ryot population—the Vokkaligar, the Ganders and others, of the Hole-Narsipur taluk, a curious custom of welcoming the new year is in vogue by having a series of nocturnal dances just before and after 'Yugadi' and these culminate in a grand festival called the 'yokli' observed on a Saturday or a Monday

\* Several very interesting contributions on Mythical and Archæological subjects which have been received will appear in our next issue.—Ed.

immediately following the new year's day. I do not know whether this 'Vokli' festival is commonly observed or not by the villagers throughout Mysore. As the festival is very popular among the villagers in the Hole-Narsipur taluk and as the ceremonials connected with it are peculiar and interesting, it may be well to describe in some detail the festival as noticed by me in the village of Hiritalal.

On the night of Friday, the 17th of March, just a week after Shivaratri day, the villagers started a procession of the village God Anjaneya (monkey god) in a car with the usual loud accompaniments of the beat of tom toms and the flourish of trumpets. The usual offering of boiled rice, fruits, etc. called 'yedai' to the God was followed by the sacrifice of a sheep which was purchased out of a common fund raised from every house owner in the village. The village of Hiritalal has 60 houses and I was told that each house owner contributed as his share of the expense, two annas. After the sacrificial offering the car procession moved on through the village towards the shrine of the 'Grama Devatal' (the guardian deity of the village) which is situated about 2 furlongs from the village. On its way thither rich persons who could afford yedais and sacrificial offerings (quite independent of the ones given before in common), invited the car to their house fronts and offered them to the God. At the Grama Devatal shrine, the car halted for a while, pujas were performed and the car then returned to the village. During the following night (commencing about 9 P.M. and running (on to midnight), almost all the male population of the village, chanting a peculiar song, danced to the beat of the drums round a stone pillar which was fixed close to a square pit (called the 'Vokli Kona') in the village. The Kona or pit is generally closed throughout the year and is opened only on the Vokli festival day after Yugadi. I was able to observe, however, in Dalgondanhalli village a Vokli Kona which was being repaired. It is a mortared pit 4 feet square and 6 feet deep with a flight of 4 steps called 'Hathigai' on all the four sides, and leading only up to the middle of the sides of the pit. At each of the four corners there was a stone pillar fixed for the villagers to dance round, and also to build a matchan or seat thereon, the purpose of which will be described later on.

At Hiritalal it appears that the nocturnal dances thus continue round the single stone pillar for nearly a month. I was told that in this year it will continue till Saturday the 16th April, on which date, the villagers observe the festival of the Vokli. All the relatives and all the neighbouring villagers who do not hold their Vokli feast on that day, are invited to come to their village to witness and to partake in the feast. The Vokli Kona or pit is then opened, and water dyed with turmeric is poured in, enough to fill the pit. At the four corners of the pit wooden posts are fixed and decorated, a matchan or seat is erected on the top of the posts for the reception of their village God Anjaneya. In some villages I am told the God Basava (Bull) is seated on the matchan. Towards the evening the boys and girls descend into the pit full of turmeric water and gambol therein, whilst the elderly people of the village and some of their neighbours and relatives who have accepted the invitation, join in a dance round the four pillars till late at night. Yedais and sacrifices are fully offered on the occasion, and I am told the villagers then loudly welcome the advent of the new year and pray to God to be pleased to bestow a good harvest, and plenty of rain in that year. The next morning the posts, if temporary, are removed, and the Vokli Kona is closed with sand or mud. This brings the 'Vokli festival' for the year to a close.

The origin of the term 'Vokli' for the festival is not clear; and nobody in the neighbourhood was able to furnish me with an explanation thereof. But I surmise the term is connected with the playing of children with turmeric water in the Kona. During Hindu marriages, just before the close, the persons assembled throw turmeric and other coloured water over one another for fun and the same term 'Vokli' is used in that connexion. Another derivation, though somewhat far fetched, is to connect the term with the Canarese word Vakkalu' which means 'residence' in the village. This derivation if correct, will be in conformity with the parading of the deity through the village, the propitiatory offerings, and lastly, by far the most significant of all, the prayers poured forth to God by the villagers on the festival day, to bestow good harvest and rain in the year, for the benefit of their stay in the village.

## THE MYTHIC SOCIETY.

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### RULES.

1. The Society shall be called the MYTHIC SOCIETY.
2. The Society was formed with the object of encouraging the study of the Sciences of Ethnology, History and Religions, and stimulating research in these and allied subjects.
3. Membership shall be open to all European and Indian gentlemen who may be elected by the Committee.
4. The Society shall be managed by a Committee consisting of the President, Vice-President, Honorary Treasurer, General Secretary with three branch Secretaries, and three other members, retiring annually, but eligible for re-election. Any four of the above members to form a quorum.
5. The subscription to be five rupees per annum to members resident in Bangalore, and two rupees per annum to members residing in the districts : payable on election, and annually before June 1st.
6. The transactions of the Society shall be incorporated and published in a Quarterly Journal which will be sent *free* to all members, and on sale at 8 annas per copy to non-members.
7. There will be nine Ordinary Meetings in each Session, at which lectures will be delivered ; due notice being given by the General Secretary.
8. Excursions to places of Historical interest, will be arranged and intimated to members.
9. Members may obtain, on application to the General Secretary, invitation cards for the admission of their friends to the lectures.
10. The Annual General Meetings will be held in March.
11. Framing and alteration of Rules rests entirely with the Committee.

E. W. WETHERELL, *General Secretary*,  
BANGALORE.

# THE MYTHIC SOCIETY.

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COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 1909-1910.

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**Patron :**

HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF MYSORE, G.C.S.I.

**Honorary President :**

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DR. MORRIS W. TRAVERS, F.R.S.

**Vice-President :**

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**Honorary Treasurer :**

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S. KRISHNASAWMI AIYANGAR, Esq., M.A., (*History*.)

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The above, ex-officio, and :—

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**Sub-Committee :**

THE GENERAL SECRETARY AND THE THREE BRANCH  
SECRETARIES.

# The Quarterly Journal

-- of the --

## MYTHIC SOCIETY.

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[No. 4.]

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### VICE-PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

*The Vice-President of the Mythic Society, the Rev A. M. Tabard, M.A., read the following Address to the Members at the Annual General Meeting of the Society :—*

GENTLEMEN,

This is the first annual meeting of the Mythic Society ; and whether we consider the number of its members at the end of the first year of its existence, or the work done during the first session, I think, we can look back on the last twelve months with feelings of intense satisfaction.

The Mythic Society is part of a movement which has sprung into existence during the last two decades or so. Interest in History, Archæology, Epigraphy and Ethnography has developed in a wonderful manner in Southern India during recent years. It is to that interest that we owe Mr. Thurston's "Castes and Tribes of Southern India," Mr. L. K. Ananta-krishna Iyer's "The Cochin Tribes and Castes," the publications of the Madras Archæological Survey Department ; the Annual Reports of the Government Epigraphist of Madras ; and with reference to Mysore, Mr. L. Rice's "Mysore and Coorg," and the most interesting publications of the Ethnographical Survey of Mysore.

The scientific world seems to have suddenly awakened to the fact that none too soon has this useful work been taken in hand, at least as far as it relates to Ethnology, as many characteristics of jungle peoples and unknown tribes are rapidly disappearing, and if not studied and recorded in time will soon, in the words of Professor Haddon, "become lost to sight and memory."



Following in the footsteps of Egyptiologists and Assyriologists, scientific men in India have become alive to the value of the result of excavations, old inscriptions and Archæological studies to give us an insight in what, at the present day, seems to have a special fascination for the human mind, the history of the past.

The principal object of the Mythic Society is to keep pace, in its humble sphere, with that movement which has spread all over the world.

The Founders of the Society thought that though a great deal had been done in Southern India, still a great deal more remained to be done. They hoped that their efforts, united to those of the many in Bangalore and the mofussil interested in those subjects, might help to throw some more light on the History, the Religions, the Archæology and Ethnology of Southern India. Though they knew that in Bangalore there was a latent interest in all those fascinating subjects, yet they hardly expected the outburst of enthusiasm which has greeted the birth of the Society. Last May they would have refused to believe the Prophet who would have foretold that within the first year of its existence the Society would have counted over 100 members in Bangalore and more than 50 in the mofussil.

The work done during the year has also exceeded their most sanguine expectations, and has been a fit answer to those who were inclined to believe that after all the work already done there was nothing left for a Society like ours.

Two instances will suffice to show what our Society has done in the field of original researches and original thought.

If any subject was looked upon as having been altogether threshed out, it was Caste. To most people it seemed as if the last word had been said on that subject. To such, Mr. Richards' paper must have been a revelation; not only has not the last word been said about Caste, but the first one has hardly yet been uttered. Mr. Richards has in his paper on Caste, put in a strong plea for placing the whole subject on a scientific basis by a scientific definition of caste. The whole framework of the caste system, he contends, is based on the *jus connubii*. The law of Endogamy is at the root of all caste distinctions, and any classification of caste phenomena is vicious which fails to recognise this fundamental fact; and, as long as this fact is ignored, Caste will remain, what unfortunately it has been up to now, a confused word which only carries erroneous ideas to the mind,

Another subject which seemed familiar to every one was the last siege of Seringapatam. Every visitor to the famous fortress was shown the very spot where Tippu fell, and an inscription has been placed at the gate where the Sultan was supposed to have met with his death. Before it was too late one of our lecturers, the Rev. Mr. Thompson, has rectified an important error, which was fast in the way of becoming historical truth, and he has shown it clearly that Tippu fell in the inner gateway which has been destroyed along with the inner ramparts. Imagination may have lost in that discovery, but what does it matter if the claims of truth have been able to assert themselves.

I have singled out those two instances for brevity's sake, as they seem to me the most striking ones in the Papers discussed during the year. Yet, I am sure, that those who have listened to the learned papers of Mr. Krishna-sawmy Iyengar, Mr. Goodwill, Major Brown, Mr. Clayton, and Mr. Mervyn Smith will agree with me that our Society has done noble work as well, in its endeavour to popularize knowledge of the subjects which come within the scope of the Mythic Society.

During the first year of its existence our efforts had to remain more or less tentative, and we have had to depend on a few pioneers who were willing to show the way and to lead, in the hope that others would follow. Those pioneers, I am sure, wish me to-night to make a most earnest appeal to those members whose leisure and knowledge could be of the greatest use to the Society. This appeal is meant for all, but more especially for mofussil members. Living as they do among the people, coming frequently into contact with unknown usages and customs, deeply versed sometimes in the folk-lore of the surrounding tribes, they could render us invaluable aid, and by sending us notes on any subject connected with the Society, help to make our monthly journal still more interesting.

They, more than others, would be in a position to throw some more light on the Ethnology of the South, and to supplement, with great honour to the Mythic Society, the learned works which have recently been published on the subject.

With their help other members, who have freer access to well-stocked libraries, may perhaps one day be able to determine what is the lowest substratum of the Indian population in Southern India; in other words, who were the first inhabitants and whence they came. Were they Negritos, as some contend? Who were the Kolareans and the Dravidians who were in possession when the Aryans discovered Southern India, and who, blended

together, form now by far, the largest proportion of the population in this part of India? Who are the Parians who seem to have been at some remote time the predominant power in the South? How much of Aryan blood flows in the veins of the inhabitants of Southern India? Those are ethnical questions of the utmost interest, intricate problems which we must all help to solve.

History also offers a large field for original researches. I know well that, unlike the History of Egypt, and of Assyria, the History of Ancient India must for ever remain a sealed book. However strenuous the attempts, I am afraid we shall never be able to trace it back even as far as the History of Greece and Rome. For practical purposes the History of India, (leaving as a blank the thousand years during which powerful empires rose and fell in the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates: or the centuries in which flourished the Republics of Greece, and which saw the foundation and progress of the Roman Republic) does not go much further back than the time of Alexander the Great, which marks to a certain extent the end of the Grecian History.

Of the South very little is known before the dawn of the Christian era, but even within this limited compass, and in spite of all that has been done, innumerable historical questions have to be cleared up. If a complete History of the Chaluyas, the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Keralas, and the Palavas is ever written, I am sure that it will yield in interest to the history of no European country. The names of the great Pulikesin, of Rajaraja the Great, of Kulottunga, will then stand by the side of the greatest kings in mediæval Europe. But unfortunately those names are now more or less mere names, and will remain so till the man rises up (and he may be a member of the Mythic Society) who will write the history of those Indian Kingdoms, and give to those great kings the place they are entitled to in the History of the World.

More interesting still perhaps, will be the complete history of Vijayanagar. Vijayanagar, which, to the shame of historical students, has been called, with some show of reason, the "Forgotten Empire." Vijayanagar, the Empire larger than that of Charlemagne, Vijayanagar, the City of Dreams, one of the largest capitals the world has ever seen, with a Court unsurpassed even by that of Imperial Rome! Two histories have already been written of that most wonderful Empire, yet the last word is far from having been said, and if the Mythic Society by learned papers on that Empire is able to throw

some more light on its history, perhaps one day the man will be found to give to the world a History of Vijayanagar. Such a history will be as much of a revelation as when Mr. R. Sewell and Mr. B. Surianarraina Row gave us their histories of their "Forgotten" or rather "Never-to-be-forgotten Empire."

The study of religions in the South is another subject which is sure to attract the attention of some of our members. Mr. Goodwill and Mr. Clayton have already explored the religious beliefs of the lowest Southren tribes and of the Parians; Mr. Thompson has given us a most interesting paper of the higher forms of religion in this part of India, but the subject is so extensive that it will take many more papers of that kind to exhaust it. It will be of the greatest interest to most of the members to know something more about the tenets and the history of Buddhism, the Vedic and the Puranic religions, the present Hinduism, the religious beliefs of the Jains, the Lingayets and the Mussalmans, as well as of their exterior manifestations as shown in those festivals scattered all over the Hindu and Mahomedan calendars.

One of the objects of the Society is to visit places of Archæological and Historical interest, more especially in the Mysore Province which can boast of the finest specimens of Indian Architecture, of Mutts rendered famous by the two great Indian reformers, Sankara Charyar and Ramanuja Charyar, of droogs and fortresses which will certainly repay a visit. It has been found impossible to carry out that idea during the first session, but I hope that next year we shall be more fortunate, and that we shall be able to visit at least some of those interesting spots.

This is a large programme I have sketched out. It may take years to realize it, but meantime another object of the Society will have been attained. It has already brought more closely together the two communities, European and Indian, on a ground where prejudice of nationality, Caste, or Creed cannot interfere; and where nothing will stand in the way of perfect understanding and harmonious union; and when I see the revered names of His Highness the Maharajah and the British Resident standing side by side at the head of the members of the Council of the Society, I feel sure that further study of Southern India will still further tighten the bonds of union between all those interested in this land of India, we all love so well, whether we belong to it by birth or by adoption.

Now, Gentlemen, it only remains for me to express the hope, which I feel certain all of you share with me, that the Mythic Society may live for many years to come, and that it may continue to do useful work in the field it has chosen for itself.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT.

*For the Session 1909-10.*

The Mythic Society was started in the hope that there might be perhaps a dozen or so gentlemen in Bangalore who would be glad of an opportunity of exchanging views on the sciences of History, Ethnology and Religions. I have unearthed a jotting of May last, headed "Possible Members." This list of "Possible Members" totalled exactly 17. That forecast, which at the time was considered sanguine, has been exceeded by nearly 1,000 per cent. The Society is not quite one year old. The present membership is :—

Resident Members	...	...	100.
Mofussil Members	...	...	74.

His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore has honoured us by becoming our Patron, and the Hon. Mr. Stuart M. Fraser by becoming our Honorary President. Among our Honorary Members we have the names of Messrs. J. H. Marshall and V. Venkayya, Sir S. Subramania Aiyar, and the Right Rev. the Bishop of Madras.

The first meeting was held on 5-5-09. A Council was elected and a Session Programme arranged without difficulty. Nine Papers have been read, covering a wide range of subjects, and the lectures were, on the whole, well attended.

Our Journal, of which two numbers have already appeared, (the third being in the press), has shown that, so far from dallying with worn out themes, we are opening up new ground. Our journal is open to Notes and Queries and we would welcome its further development as a channel by which the observations of our Mofussil Members may become the common property of us all.

The Society has certainly justified its existence, and there is abundant scope for expanding its operations.

So far we have been unable to mature the scheme of field excursions, but several Members of the Society have visited the historic sites of Hampi, Seringapatam, Bangalore Fort and Bannargatta. There will be no difficulty

in arranging Papers for the coming Session, and it is hoped that several places of interest will be visited. Steps will be taken to get together a reference library, and a small Committee has been formed to systematically organise a photographic collection.

Our out-going President, Dr. Travers, whose duties prevent his presence here to-night, is presenting the Society with a black board engraved with a large scale outline map of South India, for use in illustrating historical lectures. In November last Dr. and Mrs. Travers entertained the Members of the Society at a Garden Party at their residence in Avenue Road, where a very pleasant evening was spent.

In view of the unexpected increase in the membership of the Society, it has been decided to enlarge the Council, in order to make it more representative. We have further resolved that for the coming Session the price of the Journal shall be raised to twelve annas, and the annual subscription for Mofussil Members to three Rupees.

Our thanks are due to the gentlemen who have contributed Papers, and to the Bangalore Club for their courtesy in placing at our disposal their rooms at the Seshadri Hall.

F. J. RICHARDS.

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## RELIGION IN THE MYSORE STATE.

*A Paper read before the Mythic Society.*

BY THE REV. E. W. THOMPSON.

When the Secretary of the Section of this Society devoted to the study of Religion asked me to read a paper on the Religions of India, I felt no common degree of embarrassment; for it was not easy to see how anything at all adequate could be said about so vast a subject in the limits of a paper read before a meeting like this. Even though he has now consented to confine the range of our researches this evening within the boundaries of the Mysore State, I must still confess to being oppressed by the magnitude of my topic and to appreciating keenly the difficulty of compassing it in a few words.

Perhaps, however, there is a need and place for such a paper as this at the outset of our studies of local religions. My aim to-night will be merely to map out the field and to indicate some useful lines of enquiry. It will be quite impossible for me to treat with any minuteness or particularity any one variety of religion in Mysore; and I excuse myself all the more gladly from attempting such a task as that, because I recognize that there are members of this Society who are much more competent than myself to give the Society intimate and detailed information on one or other of the many divergent forms of religion in the State. There are, however, other members of this Society who, in the completeness of their candour, confess their unqualified ignorance of the entire subject—and it is not for us to question their sincerity. I shall frankly address myself to them, and shall seek my reward rather in the edifying of those who know nothing than in attempting to add to the erudition of the learned.

Religion has been defined in many ways, and there is no general agreement to-day either as to the derivation of the word or the contents of the idea connoted by it. I will venture, however, to put forward this evening a conception of religion which I feel confident will be accepted as sufficient for our purpose. I would define Religion as that view of the ultimate nature of the universe which is influential upon conduct. There are at least two essential elements in every man's religion—one is the metaphysical or ontological, and the other is the dynamical. Religion is a theory of being in the first aspect of it, and in the second it is a theory of being that operates upon the will and furnishes motives for action. There must be the sense of what is ulterior or final in our conception of the world, if that conception

is to be classified as religious. Religion is that which goes behind the appearances of things and seeks for real being: it passes beyond mere effects and looks for final causes. It is not satisfied with the flux of daily life—'the trivial round and the common task'—it makes enquiry as to the end or goal of life itself. Religion propounds answers to the how and why of the restless peering human soul. This is a definition of religion which is true whether we apply it to the belief of the simple animist who hears the sigh of a ghost in every night-wind and propitiates the deity immanent in the great tree; or to the subtle and abstruse doctrine of the Vedantin, that behind the false show of things there abides one unqualified and immutable Parabrahma, which is the All; or to the faith of the Christian that everything is ordered by the will of one sovereign God the Father; or to the sustaining conviction of many an Indian official that honest and good work must have its reward and lead to some dimly imagined higher order of human society; or to the grey blank Hedonism of the chief character in a recent novel of H. G. Wells. In brief, Religion is our last word about ourselves and the world in which we live.

It is necessary, moreover, that this view of the final nature of things should be influential upon conduct. Only that which is operative is our real religion. And when we apply this restriction I think that we shall discover that a great deal of what passes for religion is not such. The official creed of a man or a community ceases to be religion when it is no longer influential upon conduct. It may once have been religion, but it is now dead and has been sloughed off, oftentimes unconsciously. Following out this train of thought we shall be led to reject many external observances as religious. In the Ethnographical series, now being published by the Mysore Government, under the general editorship of Mr. H. V. Nanjundayya, a great deal of interesting information is brought together about the ceremonies connected with Hindu marriages and funerals. With regard to many of these we must say that they are not religious. No one can give any reason why one kind of tree rather than another must be used at the marriage festival, why exactly such and such offerings should be presented—the only answer ever ventured is that the performance of the rite in precisely this way is customary. Now it is not possible to regard observances of which the significance has been forgotten and lost beyond the power of recovery as religious. They may be survivals of religious practices, like the May-pole festivities of England, but they have ceased now to be religious and have passed into the field of social observance. They cannot be included under any religious formula, unless indeed we may place them under that comprehensive principle—so prevalent and powerful in India—that the customary is also the right.



On the other hand, take the case of Caste. The question has been warmly debated whether Caste should be regarded merely as a social institution or as something more than that—a religious ordinance. Hindus themselves are divided into two parties on this question. There are those who affirm that Caste is the Hindu religion, and others who describe it as merely a social convention, of proved utility and worth. For my part I have no hesitation whatever in saying that Caste is a religious institution, because it is intimately associated with a view of the ulterior constitution of the universe, and indeed it stands or falls by that view. Caste goes along with a belief in the order of creation, with the doctrine of *karma* which appoints to every man his lot and station in this life. Its supports and sanctions are religious and a breach of caste regulations is frequently regarded as more heinous than a violation of universal moral law. It is a transgression of the established order of the Universe.

It is obvious that if Religion be this—and it is this, when reduced to its lowest terms—we have need of abundant discretion in our treatment of religion; for it is the soul of a people or of an individual. It is tied up in the bundle of the prejudices, the passions, and the affections of a man: it is sometimes the last cherished possession of a nation and becomes to them the symbol of their corporate existence. Because religion is so near to the heart of men and is a part of their inmost life, and has for this reason been the occasion of controversies so bitter and wars so cruel, bloody and destructive, I was inclined to doubt whether a Society such as this could with propriety or advantage include the discussion of religion in its range of interests. Every enquiry into a religion is of the nature of vivisection—a process which, despite the assurances of eminent scientists, cannot be regarded as exhilarating or wholly devoid of discomfort to its victim. I do not, however, fear, that any ill consequences will ensue from our researches into religion here. The object of this Society is not to propagate any religion, but to truly delineate all within its purview: we are anxious to get at the facts, not to alter them. While the final and crucial test of any religion must be the character it produces, the standard we set up for ourselves here is simply that of historical truth. We have neither to reform nor to condemn, but first and last to accurately classify and describe. It will be an admirable intellectual discipline for some of us to study patiently, honestly and sympathetically the forms which religious belief and practice have assumed in our midst. We should be sure of our facts before we form our judgments.

I would lay some emphasis upon the need for sympathy in this quest. The scientific temper, determined at all costs to get at the facts and to have the truth, is by itself not enough. It will produce and maintain the atmos-

phere of a refrigerating chamber and suffice for the investigation of dead forms, but we are dealing with living and most sensitive organisms. A quick imagination and a ready sympathy must be a part of the outfit of the man who makes an enquiry into religions. The writer obsessed by one idea has inflicted many unprofitable books upon the world. Is there any so-called science which can show a larger collection of rubbish than Comparative Religion? We have had the ghost-monger and the myth-monger, and these men have fortunately run their hobbies to a standstill. They have not been entirely without their uses—for one can always learn something from the extremist—but we must recognize to-day that the foundations of religion are laid broad and deep in our nature and not in the accidental and trivial—in the infinite majesty of the material universe, in the paradox of time and space, in the mysteries of our birth and death, in hunger and pain, love and grief, and that unique element in consciousness—the dictates of the moral sense. We have to avoid a method of enquiry into religion which belittles the thing itself, and to remember that the imperfections and limitations of our own temperament and disposition will sometimes stultify the sincere love of truth. We can never truly know or understand either a philosophy or a religion until we ourselves have travelled by an inward necessity along the lines of its thought and devotion and it has shown itself to us as the natural solution of a difficulty or the satisfaction of a need which has arisen in the development of our own inner life. This may seem a hard thing to say. It reminds one of that quaint fancy of Plato that the most skilful physician must be of necessity the most sickly man, for he will have had experience in his own body of the greatest variety of diseases. It will occur to us at once that there are some primitive or low forms of religion to which we can never again be attracted: we cannot and would not realize them in our own experience. We have grown too old for the religion of the savage and the animist and can never seriously entertain his beliefs. In such cases it is only by an effort of the sympathetic imagination that we can reconstruct and project ourselves into his world and see life out of his wild darkling eyes. But in the old great religions of the world there is something strangely modern and abiding. They have an answer, it may be only partial or even false and misleading, to human desire and need.

That is true of the greatest of the constructions of Indian thought—the *Advaita* philosophy. Only he who has felt world-weariness, or pondered in vain over the seeming futility of effort, and the apparent purposelessness of history's endlessly revolving cycle, can know the power and fascination of that system. Is there one who has daily in his ears the refrain of the earth—"What profit hath man of all his labour wherein he laboureth under the sun? One generation goeth and another cometh. All things are full of weariness;

man cannot utter it : the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. That which hath been is that which shall be ; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done.....Behold all is vanity and a striving after wind"? That man seeks the changeless *One* behind the shows of time and space.

To him the Vedanta offers the cup of solace and says, much in the words of our dead English poet :—

“ From too much love of living,  
From hope and fear set free,  
We thank with brief thanksgiving,  
Whatever gods may be,  
That no life lives for ever,  
That dead men rise up never,  
That even the weariest river,  
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,  
Nor any change of light,  
Nor sound of waters shaken,  
Nor any sound or sight,  
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal  
Nor days nor things diurnal  
Only the sleep eternal  
In an eternal night.”

Religion in Mysore must mean for us that conglomerate of faiths and worships which is so conveniently described by one term—Hinduism, and yet is so difficult to define. At the last census, 92% of the population were returned as Hindus : so that all the remaining religionists put together made only a numerically insignificant minority. The Muhammadans form about 5% of the population, and the Christians, including the Civil and Military Station of Bangalore, about 1%. No one would come to the Mysore State for the study, either of Islam or of Christianity. In the one case the community is comparatively backward and without most of those splendid characteristics which may be found in it elsewhere ; and in the other case we should be dealing with an infant community still drawing its ideals and government from extraneous sources. Hinduism, however, exhibits some of its most characteristic and perfect growths in this State. The South of India rather than the North has been the nursery of Hindu religious systems. Here great ideas have been planted first : they have flowered and seeded here

and afterwards have been sown broadcast. The three chief schools of Brahmanism all took their origin in the south, and among them they almost exhaust the alternatives of religious speculation. The great master of one, the Advaitin, Sankarāchārya, founded the Matt at Sringeri, lived there for several years and perhaps died there. Though the Visishtadvaitin, Ramānujāchārya, was born at Sri Perumbudur, and lived for the greater part of his days at Kanchi and Srirangam, he fled in old age for refuge to the Mysore country and lived for several years at Melukote near French Rocks, where temple, tank, and matt, still remain as monuments of his influence and work. Mādhvāchārya was born below the Western Ghats and the chief centre of his dualist sect is at Udipi in the South Canara country, not very far from our borders.

We have here too a typically ancient people of India. The bulk of the population belongs to the Dravidian type. The Dravidians were earlier than the Aryans in their occupancy of India, with languages of their own and a civilization that must have been highly developed before the process of Brahmanising began. Their religious observances we must regard as the groundwork of all Indian religion. In many regions the Aryan or Vedic element is merely the thinnest possible veneer and sometimes it is altogether wanting. I should like at this point to remind you of the protest that has been made recently—a protest which is growing in volume—against the excessive attention which has been paid to the Vedic religion merging in Brahmanism, to the neglect of the popular faiths. Dr. Grierson, among others, has raised his voice to condemn the notion that the real religion of the people of India can be found in the Vedas or indeed in Sanskrit literature at all. His contention is that the religion of daily life, such as is practised by the common villager, and largely by the Brahmans themselves, is not to be discovered in the ancient books of the Aryan invaders or the works of religious speculation which their descendants produced in later centuries. Some of it has no written record or exposition at all, and when it finds voice, it uses the vernacular speech. The songs of wandering devotees, the verses of the Maratha poets like Tukaram, the Rāmāyana of Tulsidas are nearer to the heart of India and more typical of the religious life of its peoples than a whole library of Sanskrit philosophy or priestcraft.

There is reason in the protest. In any standard work on Indian religions, such as Barth's well-known book, or the later and more complete treatise of Professor Hopkins of America, we shall find that more than three-fourths of the volume is taken up with that process which can be traced in the *Vedas* through the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Upanishads* down to the *Purāṇas*. There will be as many pages devoted to an obsolete Vedic mythology as words

are spared for existing and widely spread popular cults. Now the Vedas are, so far as the mass of the people is concerned, a dead book. Popular rites and worships are not derived from the observances of the ancient Aryans, nor can some of the most influential and prevalent ideas, such as that of *karma*, be traced back to the *Vedas*.

There is an obvious reason why the study of Indian religion should have been so wanting in proportion. The discovery of Sanskrit was of intense interest to learned Europe. It was a language of extraordinary philological value, while to the student of religion a process of development—almost unique in history—could be traced in the sacred books of Sanskrit literature. A book is always more accessible than a man, and especially than a Hindu to an occidental enquirer. The caste system presents many obstacles to research. On the other hand industry and intelligence had only to be employed upon the ancient books to make them yield up their store of information. This was work that could be done in Europe or America as well as in India, and the result is that up to the present time a volume on the religions of India has always meant the Religions of India as they may be seen by a scholar through the medium of Sanskrit literature. We are now beginning to supply what is lacking by a number of publications in which observation and sympathetic contact with the people and the study of vernacular literatures are bringing before us the religion of the daily life of the man upon the soil.

We must commence, therefore, this sketch of the Religions of Mysore with a few notes on what are without doubt indigenous and early forms of religious worship. It is usual to describe the first and most primitive phase of Indian religion as Animistic, and Animism has been defined by the British Census Commissioner as "the belief which traces everything in the world, from the greater natural phenomena to the various diseases and misfortunes which afflict mankind, to the action of numberless, undefined forces, beings or spirits, among whom, on the theory which gives rise to the name, the souls of departed chiefs and ancestors are supposed to occupy a prominent place." I need hardly remind you of the many evidences of this form of religion that may be seen any day in or near Bangalore. The belief in malevolent ghosts or spirits is common. Folk-tales deal largely with the male or female demons that take up their residence in trees. Houses and sometimes whole villages are deserted, because they are reputed to be haunted. One can scarcely induce a cartman on a dark night to traverse a lonely road and his fears are, as he will sometimes candidly acknowledge, not of human but of spiritual foes. There are examples too of historical persons who have

been, as it were, deified or canonised, and are now the objects of worship; but such cases seem to me to belong to a higher and later phase of thought and may be better explained by the doctrine of Emanations or Incarnations. The extraordinary man is apt to be conceived as some god or other manifest in the flesh.

Any unusual natural phenomenon is readily associated with some invisible spiritual agency. A banyan tree of surpassing dimensions, a stone that crops up out of the ground and by the weathering away of the surface of the surrounding soil appears to grow, the red stain produced by the presence of iron in the earth, a pool in which periodical ebullitions take place, a rock of remarkable shape out of which a spring of water takes its rise—all these and many similar natural phenomena in the Mysore State, to name only a few instances observed by me, are associated with supernatural agency and become the objects of worship. A month or two ago I found a group of people watching with manifest wonder and awe a sight that certainly was strange at the first view. In the ditch by the roadside a pool of water had formed and every now and then a dome of muddy liquid would rear itself above the surface of the pool and subside with a swirl into its depths. What could it be? Some monstrous snake that lay in the bowels of the earth and ever and anon reared its crest, troubling the waters? An answer was sought with growing excitement and alarm. Alas, that the explanation should be so commonplace—a water-pipe had burst. In that country district a pumping engine, the first of its kind, had been erected newly to drive the water to a drought-stricken town. Thus was a first-class wonder spoiled in the making. To sum up—the propitiation of the spirits of the fields and jungles must be said to be a part of the popular religion in this country.

Beyond that we come to the conception of local and tutelary deities. Every village has its *grāmadevate*. This deity is often the female goddess, Mariamma or Durgamma or Kaliamma, who is believed to be the sender of smallpox and other plagues upon man and beast and must be appeased annually and on special occasions by offerings of blood. The *sidi* festival in Mysore City, even in the mild form allowed by a humane Government, is a notable example of this form of worship. Every year the two rival parties of Holeyas residing at opposite ends of the city meet at the old clock-tower. Their champions are hoisted in the air at the end of long poles and each endeavours to strike down the garland which is suspended above the head of his opponent—the victory going to him who succeeds first. Before this bloodless mock combat takes place in the air, a buffalo is beheaded in the street below.

The rude temple of Mariamma with its alternate stripes of red and white indicates a primitive worship by its very structure. Its priests belong to the lowest castes: but in times of pestilence even Brahmans and other twice-born men under stress of fear will perform sacrifices to the maleficent goddess.\*

There is no symbol of worship more common in South India than the Linga: it is present in every temple dedicated to Siva. The question arises as to whether this phallic emblem belongs to the Dravidian cult and has been adopted through its prevalence by the Brahmans who represent Aryan religion, or whether it was really a part of the Aryan religion, though not in evidence in the *Vedas*. There are indications that the cult of the phallic emblem was followed among the Scythian or semi-Mongolian tribes of Central Asia; and conceivably it might have been in vogue both among the Aryans and among their successors, the Scythian hordes, before the time of their entering India. The weight of evidence seems to me to indicate that Linga worship belongs to the earlier stratum of Hinduism and must be assigned to the Dravidian element in Indian religion. While there is nothing obscene in the image itself, it is impossible that it can be made the symbol of a refined or exalted pure faith. The spirit of this worship has been caught exactly by Sir Alfred Lyall in his lines on Siva:—

"I am the god of the sensuous fire  
That moulds all nature in forms divine;  
The symbols of death and of man's desire,  
The springs of change in the world are mine;  
The organs of birth and the circlet of bones  
And the light loves carved on the temple stones.

"I am the lord of delights and pain  
Of the pest that killeth, of fruitful joys;  
I rule the currents of heart and vein;  
A touch gives passion, a look destroys;  
In the heat and cold of my lightest breath  
Is the might incarnate of Lust and Death."

Siva in his horrific and ascetic form, the Great God performing *tapas* in the graveyard, ash-besmeared and using skulls as his playthings, has little affinity with the Rudra of the *Vedas* with whom he has been identified. Perhaps he is one of the gloomy creations of the trist aboriginal Indian temperament.

\* Of course the village goddess whose emblem and resting-place are sometimes no more than a stone beneath a tree is now said to be one of the forms or manifestations of Parvati, the spouse of Siva. This, however, is only an outstanding example of the method by which the earlier primitive worships have been brought inside the Brahmin scheme. We must distinguish between what is original and what has been acquired,



I must pass on, however, to the next stratum in the Religions of Mysore—the Brahman contribution. There is no lack of examples of the Brahmanising process in the Mysore State. We are able to watch it in operation even at the present day. There are two component parts of the movement that may be distinguished:—(i) the method of including a non-Brahmanic worship in the general Hindu system and (ii) the bringing of an outside community within the pale of the caste organisation, of which an essential feature is the recognition of the Brahman's claim to supremacy.

With regard to the first part of the process, it is common to attach a family communal or tribal deity to the Hindu Pantheon by making him out to be a manifestation or incarnation of some Vedic or Brahman god. I will not speak here of the identification of the horrific Siva with Rudra of the *Vedas* or of that of Krishna, the dark prince, with Vishnu. Such identifications took place, if at all, in a remote past, and the evidence for them is of an indirect kind to be gleaned from ancient writings and collateral circumstances. I shall prefer to illustrate this point by one or two references to things nearer to us in space and time. We may take the case of Chamundeswari, the tutelary goddess of Mysore City. Chamundi is of course one of the forms of the consort of Siva, and as such her worship is naturally a branch of the Saiva cult. The early Rajas of Mysore were, we know, devotees of Siva, and there was no inconsistency in their regarding the goddess as the guardian of their capital city and royal line. But a change took place. At the present time the family Guru is the Sri Vaishnava-Parakalaswami, though Chamundeswari still keeps her place as the tutelary deity. A distinguished Mysore official, who was in a position to be well acquainted with matters of the kind, informed me that there was a unique feature in the legendary history of Chamundeswari. She was said to be an incarnation, not as might be supposed of Parvati, wife of Siva, but of Lakshmi, wife of Vishnu. If such be the case, then there has been probably a double process of Brahmanising. In the first instance the goddess worshipped in an ancient Dravidian shrine upon the hill may have been identified with Siva's consort, and a *sthala purāṇa* or *mahātmya* was composed which related that upon this spot the buffalo-headed monster, Chamunda, was slain. Subsequently when the Sri Vaishnava sect gained an entrance into the kingdom and their influence became predominant in the palace, they sought to give a new turn to the legend, ascribing to Lakshmi a feat which belonged more appropriately to Siva's wife. The matter is doubtful, but it will serve at least as an illustration of a tendency.



We come on to surer ground, however, in the incident which I will now cite. Mr. Nanjundayya says in his monograph on the Dombars, a low caste of wandering tumblers:— "The name of their tribal god is Gurumurti and their tribal goddess is Yallamma. In recent years they have been largely influenced by the Vaishnava faith and many have undergone the symbols of the branding of that faith, namely Sankha and Chakra, at the hands of the Satanis, and undertake pilgrimages to Tirupati, the shrine of Venkataramanaswami in the North Arcot District. In the quarters of the settled Dombars, when they contain a sufficient number of houses, they invariably have a temple for Yallamma which they worship under the name (recently given) of Adi Sakti."

The process is thus principally a matter of words: the old worship receives no real enrichment or elevation. The deity remains as it was, save that it receives a Sanskrit designation.

The Mysore country teems with places which are associated with the legends of the Great Epics and the *Purāṇas*. The Malnad especially seems to have been worked over by the makers of *Mahātmyas*. Near Tirthahalli is the dam said to have been constructed by Bhima. At Hiremagalur, two miles from Chikmagalur, stands a curious stone monument which is reported to have been the yupastambha or sacrificial pillar erected by King Janamejaya when he performed his great serpent sacrifice. Similarly the streams and peaks of this romantic district are honoured with Sanskrit names and associated with legend. It is not surprising that it should be so. Whatever may be the inclination of the modern Mysore official to look upon the Malnad as the Siberia of the State, it found favour with the Brahmans of old. They may have seen in the mountains of the Western Ghats or the Bababudan range, the southern equivalents of the Himalayas. More probably, the never-failing rainfall gave them the promise of a comfortable and secure livelihood, while the loveliness and retirement of the valleys seemed to furnish a fitting frame for a life of meditation, sacrifice and learning. Here at any rate notable *matts* were established and thriving communities of Brahmans will be found at the present day in many of the villages.

There is a further question which may be raised before we dismiss these local *Purāṇas*. It frequently happens that the temple *mahātmya* is said to be contained in a certain section of some standard *Purāṇa*, that is one of the eighteen which are recognized as belonging to the canon of Hindu scripture in its second branch of *Smṛiti* or Tradition. What has happened in cases of this kind? Shall we suppose that the priests discovered or invented some legend about the place of their settlement and then foisted it upon the

*Purāna*; or did they bring the legend along with them in the old book and localise it according to their belief, fancy, or financial interest? If the latter course has been followed extensively we should find that different places in the north and the south of India contend for the honour of being the scene of the same tale. It is likely that both courses have been adopted. We know that the *Mahābhārata* itself has grown to its present bulk by a process of interpolation and accretion. This is a field of enquiry which has scarcely been entered. It is not likely to yield very much in the way of certain results, for we are dealing with men devoid of the historical sense and material utterly unhistorical.

The second part of the Brahmanising process is the bringing of the community within the caste organization. This is generally facilitated by the invention of some legend which will suitably account for the present position and occupation of the community. It is indispensable that every reigning family should be provided with a pedigree which takes it back into uncounted ages before history began. Its members must be made out to be scions of one or other of the two great branches of the Kshatriya or warrior stock, that is—either to the Sūryavamsa, the Sun Family, or to the Chandravamsa, the Family of the Moon. Mr. Risley has given an example in his Census Report of a petty Raja of quite modern origin who was enabled in this way to trace his ancestry back to the Saisunāgas of pre-Buddhist times.

There is no Rājput or Kshatriya prince who can lay claim to bluer blood or more genuine antiquity than the Maharaja of Udaipur, and in the case of his family the historical record does not commence any earlier than the eighth century of our era. In centuries much later than this the caste organization, according to Mr. Kennedy, was introduced into Rajputana and along with it, as an indispensable auxiliary, the mythological genealogy.

But this luxury of a genealogy is not confined to the powerful and high-born, it is shared by the very lowest—even by the out-caste. As an example of the stories which are told to explain and to fortify the caste system, let me cite one only referring to the Agasa or Dhobie caste, so well known to most of us by the manifold tribulations and losses that it inflicts on the wearers of linen:—

“Five goddesses—Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Parvati, consorts of the three members of the Triad, and Sachi and Chhāya, wives of Indra and Sūrya, felt a difficulty in getting someone to wash their clothes. Just then they saw a woman coming towards them with a boy, and asked her to

do this work, promising to give whatever she desired as her remuneration. The woman took the clothes to the sea in a bundle and finding no stone slab to wash the clothes on, cut off the head of the boy, used his blood as colouring matter, eyes as indigo, the flesh as fuller's-earth, the back as a slab, legs as fuel and forearms as ironing rods and the abdomen as the pot. She obtained fire by praying to Agni, the god of fire, and thus cleaning the clothes, she took them back to the divine ladies. They were naturally gratified at the result, but not finding the boy with her, they questioned the woman, who reluctantly informed them of the use she had made of his mortal frame. Highly touched by the act of devotion, they told her to call him by name, and when she did so, lo! the boy stood smiling before her. The gods of the Triad, pleased on hearing this, promised her a further boon, which she formulated as knee-deep water (for washing), ankle-deep food (as wages) and a monopoly of washing clothes. The Agasas are the progeny of this son of the original washerwoman."

The question now emerges, when did the Brahmans enter Mysore and establish and extend their influence here. Mr. Rice in the *Gazetteer*, on the evidence of inscriptions belonging to the south of this State, inclines to the opinion that they came by royal invitation in the second and third centuries A.D., and that their influence became predominant after the overthrow and decline of the Buddhists and Jains.

I can only mention in passing these last two most interesting sects. We have here in this State in the Chitaldrug district the most southerly of the Asokan inscriptions, dating from the third century B.C. They are, however, the sole traces of the Buddhist religion in Mysore. We need to avoid what is a generally prevailing misconception concerning Buddhism in India. For my part, I do not believe that it was ever a religion of the people, save in the North-West where there was a large immigrant Scythian or semi-Mongolian element in the population, and where not only the kings, like Kanishka of whom we have been hearing so much of late, but also their subjects, for the time at least, embraced the tenets of a debased Buddhism. But elsewhere Buddhism was the religion of a small but influential class of nobles and merchants. It was never accepted by the common people, who had their own ancient worship and continued to adhere to them. Buddhism rose and fell, flourished or decayed, according as it was or was not the Court religion. The Sramanas, like the Brahmans, formed a small learned community. We know that one or two of the Pallava kings on the East Coast were Buddhists, and there are the remains at Amaravati in the Godavari District to attest the faith of some princes; but

there is no evidence to show that the Buddhists ever succeeded in the south in wedding their beliefs to the observances of the vulgar.

Similar remarks might be made about the Jains—with this distinction, that the Jains were certainly more numerous and powerful in the south than ever were the Buddhists. They came for purposes of trade or for Government administration. The Jain writers created the earliest Kanarese literature. The names of Jain Prime Ministers and Generals in Mysore are known to us from inscriptions; but their religion was confined equally to a small and exclusive class. It never seems to have spread outside the capital cities. All the remains of Jain temples known to me, such as those at Tonnur, Halebid, Arsikere and Angadi, are in cities that were capitals or sub-capitals of provinces. The difference between the Buddhists and Jains on the one hand and the Brahmans on the other lay not in number, but rather in the fact that the latter brought with them a method of compromise and assimilation which enabled them to take the popular religions into a sort of system conferring on them a loose and vague relationship and a similarity of type, while at the same time they organized the different communities and tribes into the hierarchy of Caste, the Brahman always being the apex of the social pyramid.

It would be a mistake to suppose that these three sects existed and flourished in succession to one another: they existed and were influential contemporaneously. The Brahmans were never extinguished and were always probably the more numerous and powerful, though there were seasons when they suffered a temporary eclipse at Court. I should be inclined therefore, on general grounds to place the entrance of the Brahmans into Mysore before the beginning of the Christian era, though from the eighth to the eleventh century and as late as the thirteenth, the Jains were powerful.\* The commencement, however, of that Brahmanising process which has resulted in Hinduism and in Hindu society in its modern aspect, must be dated from the time of Kumārila and Sankarāchārya in the eighth and ninth centuries. These two men were the apostles of Brahmanism; they travelled widely refuting adversaries and according to tradition ground their Jain opponents in oil-mills; they converted kings and instituted castes; they built temples and sanctified popular cults; and Sankarāchārya in his numerous commentaries gave to the Adwaita Philosophy its final and completed form. It is difficult to find a place in his life for all the work with which he is credited, because according to one tradition he died or was

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\* It is not implied that all Brahmans in Mysore so called are immigrants and of Aryan descent. Cranial measurements prove that there is a large Dravidian element in South Indian Brahmans even as they reveal the Mongolian strain in the Brahmans of Bengal.

translated at the early age of thirty-two. There is some doubt, however, about the date of his death which may be A. D. 769 or A. D. 820.

His followers, the Smārtas, are to-day by far the most numerous sect of Brahmans in this province. Their external distinguishing mark is the white ash smeared horizontally in three lines across the forehead. What then is the religious doctrine of the Smārtas—the Adwaita or Monist system? It may be said to rest upon a doctrine of being. According to the Adwaitin the teaching of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* is that there is one sole being, the neuter Brahma. This is without differentiation or attribute of any kind. It is *nirguna*, and concerning it no predication can be made. We may say only that it is not thus nor thus; inasmuch as the nature of ultimate being transcends thought and language under the conditions of human life. What then is the manifold phenomenal world familiar to our senses? It is the product of the principle of *Māyā* or Illusion. Brahma is enveloped by *Māyā*, and as a consequence that which is really one appears to be many. The whole phenomenal world comes into existence, beginning with a Personal Creator and the gods and passing down to the lowest order of animate life, or with the elements of matter and by a process of mixture ending in all the varieties of concrete compound things. Salvation is release from Illusion, or Ignorance (*Avidya*), as it is otherwise called, and the attainment not of knowledge of the one True Being, (for in all knowledge there is of necessity a duality—the famous sentence, *Tat twam asi*, itself being an example of that), but of identification with or absorption in the sole supreme Brahma.

It might seem that a doctrine of this kind leads straight to the abandonment of all activity and to universal self-extinction. The Adwaitin seeks to guard his system against such an interpretation as this by allowing that this world has a sort of relative value and existence. It is true that the gods are themselves as illusory as men, that the *Vedas* and all scriptures and sacrifices and acts of worship belong to the region of the phenomenal: but there is no short cut out of non-being into being. Each man must do his appointed duty in this life, serve his ancestral god, and perform the customary rites in order that he may thereby advance himself a stage onward. By the practice of the conventional virtues and duties he may in the end arrive at that state of life—Brahmanhood—where it may be possible and permissible for him to essay the last discipline of knowledge and by attaining Oneness with the Brahma stay for ever the revolving cycle of births. A wise man in this degree of perfection will be careful not to upset the minds of those less advanced than himself: for the sake of the ignorant he will continue so long as he lives to act as if those things were real which he has long perceived to be false and fleeting.

This, in brief, is the scheme of doctrine and of conduct based upon it which is set out in the Adwaita. It is obvious that it lays itself open to attack on two sides:— first as an Ontology. The critics of the Adwaita have not been slow to point out that this system succeeds no better than any other in avoiding duality. What is *Māyā*, but some undefined Second brought in alongside of Brahma? The influence and effects ascribed to it cannot possibly arise out of that which is non-existent; but if *Māyā* be existent, then what becomes of the Oneness of Being? To this the Adwaitin can only reply that we must not say of Maya either that it is or that it is not: it is something indescribable or intermediate between being and no-being.

A more serious objection, however, was brought from the side of religion. Rāmānujāchārya in the eleventh century denounced the Adwaita school on the ground of impiety. It denied the distinction between the supreme God and man. He taught that salvation must be won by Bhakti, and not by Gnāna—by the love and service of God and not by knowledge and self-realisation. He accepted the doctrine that there is only One true Being; but in that Being there are included differentiations and relations. The sovereign Lord Narayana, or Vishnu, contains within himself the whole universe; and he also pervades it as Spirit, even as the mind of man pervades his body. The aggregate of sentient or intelligent souls which are infinite in number composes, as it were, the intelligent part of the body of the Lord; and the aggregate of material substances is the non-intelligent part of his body. Thus the supreme Brahma is not *nirguna*: he is *saguna*, possessed of all auspicious attributes. He is a person, and final bliss consists in an intimate communion with him which falls short of identification. The school of Rāmānujāchārya is known as the Visishtādvaita or Modified Monist. It comes nearest to the Hegelian conception of the Unity in Diversity, the one being indispensable to the other and neither being conceivable apart from the other.

From the standpoint of religion Rāmānujāchārya is a person of great importance, because the Bhakti movement, which in the course of the next few centuries overspread the whole of India, seems to have taken its rise in him. Rāmānanda of Benares was a disciple of his school; and from Rāmānanda to the East branched out the sect of Chaitanya, and to the West and South the sects of Kabir and of Nānak, the founder of Sikhism. The poets of Central India and the Maratha country caught their fervour from the same source. This Bhakti movement has been quite recently the object of special investigation. Was it or was it not influenced by Christianity? Dr. Grierson is convinced that the apostles of the movement in the South were in touch with the early Christian missionaries and communities. Without doubt

Krishna worship was borrowed from the Gospels. But on the wider question I give the cautious Scotch verdict, "Not proven." It seems to me that we have a sufficient explanation of the rise of Bhakti in the reaction that was provoked by the Advaita system, which was felt to be chilling to the heart and destructive of the common duties of life.

The Srivaishnava or Iyengar Brahmans are the followers of Rámánuja. They wear the Náma or trident mark in red and white upon the forehead. Many of the Sudra castes were influenced by the movement; and there are here the wandering Vaishnava devotees, the Sátanis and Dasas, whose *Dāsara Padagalu* are our Kanarese equivalents of the Bhakti literature of the North.

I must pass by the Mādhva sect, which is outwardly distinguished by the perpendicular black line in the centre of the forehead, and holds a doctrine of dualism—God, the material universe, and individual souls being allowed to have a separate and independent existence—in order that I may devote a few words in the last place to the Lingáyats community. This is of special interest and importance, because it represents a heterodox or anti-Brahman movement, an upheaval of the indigenous population against the Brahman domination. The Lingáyats are exclusive worshippers of Siva and his bull Nandi: they are sectarians of an ardent type and are outwardly known by the *karadige*, or little silver box suspended around the neck, in which the Lingam is carried. This Lingam must be worshipped daily and all food is presented to it before being consumed. The Lingáyats in this province number about 700,000. Many of them are respectable traders, but the greater number are cultivators, forming a class of well-to-do ryots in the villages of the north. They are found commonly from Harihar down to Tumkur, and outside the province Hubli and Dharwar are centres where they muster strong.

There are two points on which the Lingáyats, or Vira Saivas as they prefer to be called, are sensitive. One is the antiquity of their faith. They protest most vigorously against the statement of the *Gazetteer* that their religion was founded by one Basava about the middle of the 12th century. Their own belief is that the Siva worship to which they are devoted goes back to the beginning of time; that in prehistoric epochs it was practised and promulgated by great sages whose names are preserved in the *Purenas*; and that Basava was only a revivalist—one who restored a faith that had fallen on evil days. He is said to have been an incarnation of Nandi, Siva's servant, and was sent into the world to restore and propagate the right faith and worship. I believe that they are right to this extent, that the Linga cult is old, exceedingly old; that it existed long before Basava was born; and



that it was one of the indigenous worships. Basava is an historical character. He lived at the court of Kalyana in the Deccan, where Bijjala or Bijjanna, the Kalachuri chieftain, had usurped the throne of the last of the Western Chálukyas. Basava was a Brahman by birth, but he repudiated the sacred thread and many of the daily and occasional ceremonies of the Brahmans. Intelligent Lingáyats have compared their sect to the Buddhists and say that it is a revolt against excessive ceremonialism similar to that which was inaugurated by Sákyamuni.

To a small degree this description may be accepted as true of Lingáyatism. The Vira Saivas repudiate Sráddhas, they do not perform sacrifices for worldly ends, and they deny the efficacy of pilgrimages. Such at least is the information supplied by one of the sect; but probably these statements require some qualification. It would seem therefore that the revolt headed by Basava was in favour of a simpler and more natural ritual, and that he kindled a sectarian fervour for the worship of Siva under the symbol of the linga which was parallel to the bhakti movement among the Vaishnavas.

The second point to which I wish to refer is the social status of the Lingáyat community and their attitude towards caste. They take exception to the further statement of the *Gazetteer* that Basava repudiated caste, while they most vehemently object to be classified by Census Commissioners or Government pamphleteers with the Sudras. The Lingáyat claim, which I think must be admitted, is that their community represents not a single caste, but a distinct variety of Hindu religion. It is said that within the sect all the castes are to be found; that just as Vaishnavas may be Brahmans or Sudras or Pariahs, so also among themselves there are priestly, warrior, trading, cultivating or servile castes. The priest's occupation is hereditary: it can be followed only by those who belong to one or other of the families descended from the five sages who are traditionally reputed to have founded the religion. Though originally the sect must have been an actively proselytizing one, the modern Lingáyats seem most anxious to clear themselves of the stigma of wishing or trying to join others, especially Pariahs, to their religion. To gain an entrance into a caste of the sect is said to be most difficult and well-nigh impossible. Thus one of them writes:—"Just as any Pariah is taken into the Vaishnava religion, so a Madiga is taken into the Vira Saiva religion. But his privileges are confined to the wearing of the Linga and its worship. The mere act of conversion will not enable him to pass the social barriers which he cannot otherwise pass. The distinctions between the descendants of the original founders of the religion and all converts have been maintained from the remotest times and are maintained even at the present day."



The historical account of the development of this sect, then, appears to be that in the beginning Basava revolted from orthodox Brahman observance, that he professed an extreme and exclusive devotion to Siva, that he gathered around him at Kalyana so numerous a following of semi-ascetic Jangamas as to be able to over-awe the king himself, that he and his nephew gave some kind of organisation to their disciples who were probably in the beginning drawn from all classes without distinction of caste, and that in course of time, as has happened to other movements which began in opposition to the caste system, the religious orders instituted by Basava and his successor and the social and occupational distinctions in the body of the laity hardened into castes. So that protest dies out in complete surrender. This has been the course and fate of almost every liberal movement in India.

I must now conclude this summary review of the leading varieties of Hinduism which are to be found in the Mysore area, but before I sit down I should like to indicate, if possible, the ideas which seem to be common to all the sects. The task is difficult, as all students of Hinduism are aware. One great authority has affirmed that in orthodox Hinduism only two universally accepted ideas can be found, viz.:—reverence for the Brahman and reverence for the cow. The case is, I trust, not quite so hopeless as that.

The following appear to me to be very generally received ideas :—

(I) *A Belief in One God.*—Almost every Hindu will allow that there is One God the Creator, though some of them will qualify the admission, as we have seen, by affirming about the Creator that he is equally with the individual man a temporal or illusory being, having only a provisional authority. But with very few Hindus is this belief in God strongly operative. It is one of the leading principles of Hinduism that God needs to be brought near. He is brought near by the doctrine of avatars and still more by the use of images and most of all by a delegation of his providence to minor deities. The common illustration is that the Shambog counts for more with the villager than the Maharaja himself. The Great God, the Creator of all the worlds, is for all practical purposes too far-off, and it is the local deity who is the real object of worship. He is thought to be the saviour and guardian with whom prayer is effective.

(II) *A Belief in Karma.*—Every action is thought to produce its appropriate fruit and one must eat the fruit of one's actions. I do not think that the average Hindu has any distinct idea about the hereafter, save this. Some devotees, of course, may entertain a hope of entrance

into one of the sectarian heavens with its bands of celestial guards, courtesans, and worshipping saints. But such hopes are not widely prevalent, nor warmly and clearly conceived. They cannot be entertained where there is so much illiteracy and where so little of instruction is given. The Hindu goes out of life darkly and vaguely believing that in some way or other his future lot depends upon his present conduct—it is most probable that he will be born hereafter in this world in some new form suitable to his desserts; and herein comes in the belief in *Punarjanma* or re-incarnation which is closely associated with that of *Karma*.

(III) *A Belief in the Existence of Spirit*.—There were of course, according to tradition, schools of materialists in India, but these are now non-existent or weakly represented. There is a general belief that there is a spirit in man which is the eternal part of him; it is both the *aja* and the *amara*—the unborn and the undying. The defect of Hindu thought is that there is so little recognition of what constitutes the spiritual: without this the distinction between the spiritual and the material is of no value.

(IV) *A Belief in the existing Social Order or Caste as a divine institution*, or at least as the outcome of the working of the law of *Karma*:—This belief, however, is rapidly weakening.

(V) And closely related to this last, *a Belief that whatever is, and especially what has been for generations, is right*. The Way of the Elders is the Path of Virtue—Custom and Duty are almost interchangeable and equivalent terms.

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## PERINGĀLA VĒṬṬUVANS.

In my first volume of the "Cochin Tribes and Castes" an account of the customs and manners of the Vēṭṭuvans or Vēṭṭuva-Pulayans, a purely agricultural tribe with no wild habits whatever, has been described by me\*; but an aboriginal tribe, purely jungle-folk, living in the forests of the northern parts of the Chirakkal Taluk of North Malabar, came to my notice in November last, during my Ethnographical tour in those parts. I had the opportunity of seeing them in their own places and studying their customs and manners which are described below. (The author has kindly added some photographs of these people, which are here produced.—Editor.)

The word 'Vēṭṭuvan' means a 'hunter.' They are probably of the same stock as the 'Vedans.' In the Tamil districts, the Vēṭṭuvans are an agricultural and hunting caste, found mainly in the districts of Salem, Coimbatore and Madura. It is said, that in ancient times, the Kōnga kings invited the 'Vēṭṭuvans' from the Chola and Pandya kingdoms to assist them against the 'Keralas.'

The 'Vēṭṭuvans' I propose to deal with in the following pages are more aboriginal and semi-agricultural serfs, hunters, and collectors of forest produce. In North Malabar there are, among the Vēṭṭuvans, two endogamous divisions called 'Kuḍi' and 'Peringāla.' The former belong to the agricultural class of Vēṭṭuvans or Vēṭṭuva-Pulayans above referred to, while the latter to the numbers of the second division. These latter are again sub-divided into 14 Illams (the house-names of the Jenmies or land lords), whom they serve.

The Vēṭṭuvans live in mud huts made of split bamboos and thatched with elephant grass called 'Kuḍumbus.' The floor is slightly raised and is generally damp during the rainy months. Sometimes the roof is supported on four or six bamboo or wooden posts with the sides covered with bamboo mats, palmyra leaves, or reeds. There is, generally, a single room, and the door is low, and made of a single palm leaf or reeds. Sometimes a small low opening serves the purpose of the door. The fire-place is in one corner of the hut, and cooking is done inside it in the rainy months, and outside it during summer. There is no furniture of any kind except a few coarse mats of their own making on which they sleep, a wooden mortar and a few pestles for pounding rice, several pans, a few fish baskets, a few cocoanut shells for keeping salt and other things, a few baskets, big and small, and a vessel for containing toddy. These, which form the whole property of a Vēṭṭuvan, seem to satisfy all his requirements.

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\* Chap. VII, 1, 128-134.





Regarding the origin of these people there is a fantastic legend. It is said that one of their tribe went and asked a high caste Nayar to give him one of his daughters in marriage; and that the Nayar offered to do so, provided that the whole tribe would go to his place and dance on berries, each one who fell, being shot with arrows. The tribe foolishly agreed to the condition and danced, with the result that, as each one fell, he or she was mercilessly shot dead with arrows. A little girl who survived this treatment was secretly rescued and taken away by a compassionate Nayar, who married her into his family, and to this day they hold the caste of that particular Nayar in very great veneration \* †.

They are wholly illiterate and speak a kind of low Malayalam largely mixed up with Tamil words and terminations. It is very probable that they are the descendants of the original inhabitants of Kerala who must have been Tamil-speaking, for the earliest form of the Malayalam language is *Koḍum Tamil* (the oldest form of Tamil). Dr. A. H. Keane remarks, that the fact that these and other low tribes speaking Dravidian Malayalam is very curious, and that it finds its analogy in the broken English of the Negroes of North America and elsewhere. He thinks that they had a language which is now forgotten.

*Marriage Customs*:—Among them marriage is performed both before and after puberty. It is purely a transaction of the parents of the couple. Blood relationship is a bar to marriage, and a young man may not marry any young woman of his father's or mother's clan (illam). When a young man wishes to be married, his father and maternal uncle seek to find a suitable girl for him; and when such a one is selected, they talk over the matter with her parents. In the event of their willingness for the proposed match they choose a day, and the parents of the bride and bride-groom, as also a few of their relatives meet together in the bride's house to make the negotiations and final settlement for the celebration of the wedding. The bride-groom's father or uncle present the bride's parents ten measures of rice and a pot of toddy with which they are treated to a feast. The auspicious day for the celebration of the wedding is then fixed, and the number of guests that should attend it is also determined.

The Vêṭṭuvans generally celebrate their weddings on Wednesday nights, and on such an auspicious night, the bride-groom and his party arrive at the house of the bride, an hour or two earlier with a few measures of

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† *Madras Mail*, 1907.

\* This story seems to be the common stock in trade of many other Malabar tribes. It is the same story that accounts for the humble position occupied by the servile class in Nānchinnādu in South Travancore.—S.K.



cocoanut-oil for lighting and a few pieces of cloths for the wedding dress. At the appointed hour the bride is introduced to the bride-groom, who ties the conjugal collar (tali) round her neck. At this time the sisters of the married couple hold broad pieces of cloth over their heads. There is then a grand feast for the bride-groom's party as well as to their friends and relations. The rest of the night is spent in music and wild dancing. Next morning after breakfast, the bride-groom returns home along with his party and his newly wedded wife. There again the bride's party who have accompanied them are sumptuously fed. The marriage lasts for four days, after which they live as husband and wife. Among the Vêttuvans a man may marry seven times, but never, when he has already one wife. Polyandry is unknown among them. If a woman commits adultery with a man of a lower caste, she is out-casted, but is condoned if it is done with one of her own caste. Divorce is freely allowed, and each one is at liberty to enter into matrimonial alliance with whomsoever he or she likes. When a woman is about to become a mother, she is lodged in a separate hut, with hardly any woman to attend on her when labour begins. She is not expected to need any help. If, however, she is of a nervous disposition, her mother or some grown-up woman may stand behind her, and hold her as she stoops, and shake her up and down until the delivery takes place. After delivery the mother and the baby are bathed; the former, for want of means, is not under any special treatment during confinement. Pollution lasts for fifteen days, but the woman is not quite free from it for 40 days. She resumes her ordinary duties after two or three weeks. When the child is old enough to sit unsupported, the father gives it the name of his father or that of one of his ancestors.

The Vêttuvans are very poor, and have nothing to inherit; but, when questioned on inheritance, they say that succession is in the female line. They have no caste governments. Living on the lands of their masters and working for them day and night, they are always guided by their commands; but when a large number of them work under a landlord, he appoints one of them a headman, who is called a 'Kirân', or 'Parakotty' (drummer) who presides over their marriage, funeral, and other ceremonies, and settles all disputes of a trivial nature. All serious disputes and complaints among them are brought to the notice of the landlord for decision and punishment. The headman is, in fact, an intermediary of the landlord.

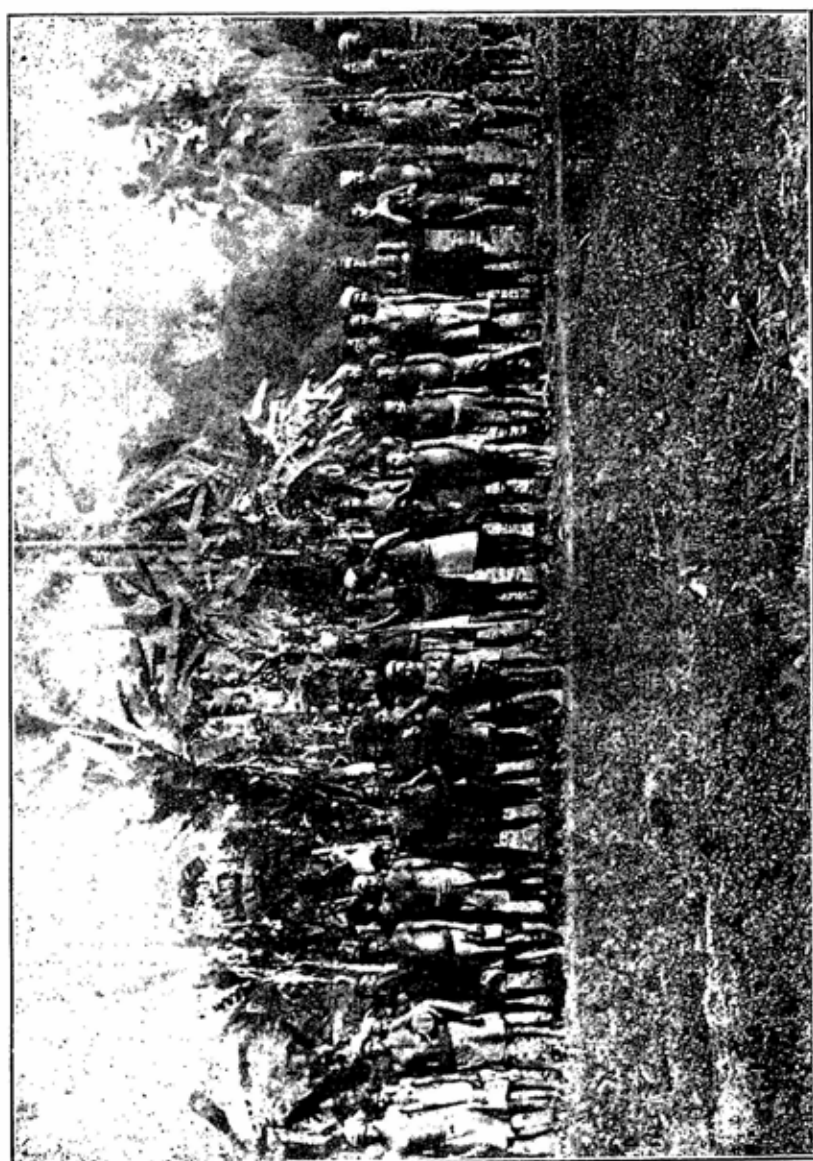
*Religion* :—The Vêttuvans, who are steeped in ignorance, are animists in religion. Their chief gods are 'Gulikan' (a demon, son of Saturn), 'Malamkorathi' (a Sylvan deity), 'Pottan' (Paradevata), 'Kutti-Chathan' (a











mischievous imp), and 'Bhairavan,' (Siva in the hideous form of Paradevata, riding on a dog worshipped in Sakti-puja), to whom offerings of goats and fowls are made in Thulam (October-November), in Vishu on the first of Medom (about 12th April). When questioned as to the real nature of them, they appear to possess no clear idea, but believe in their existence, because they are seen from time to time in their priests, who are their own castemen and turn Velichapads (oracles) to speak out the divine will. They believe them to be the lords of hills and valleys, rocks and forests. With them, religion is not a mere abstraction, but permeates the whole social system.

Ancestor worship is much in vogue among them, and the spirits of their departed ancestors are invoked at all times of their calamities, because they are potent for good and evil; and to keep them friendly offerings to them are made on new moon days in *Karkadagom* (July-August), *Thulam* (October-November), *Makarom* (January-February). All misfortunes and diseases in their families are mainly attributed either to their indifference or negligence in the propitiation of them with due offerings. Animistic in religion they go in dread of malignant spirits which haunt them in the forests. They are a truthful lot of good people, of high moral character, the chastity of their womankind being held very sacred.

*Funeral customs*:—The Vèttuvans generally bury their dead. The chief mourner is either the nephew or the son. Pollution lasts for fifteen days like that of their landlords, and on the morning of the sixteenth they bathe to be free from it and make rice-ball offerings to the departed spirit.

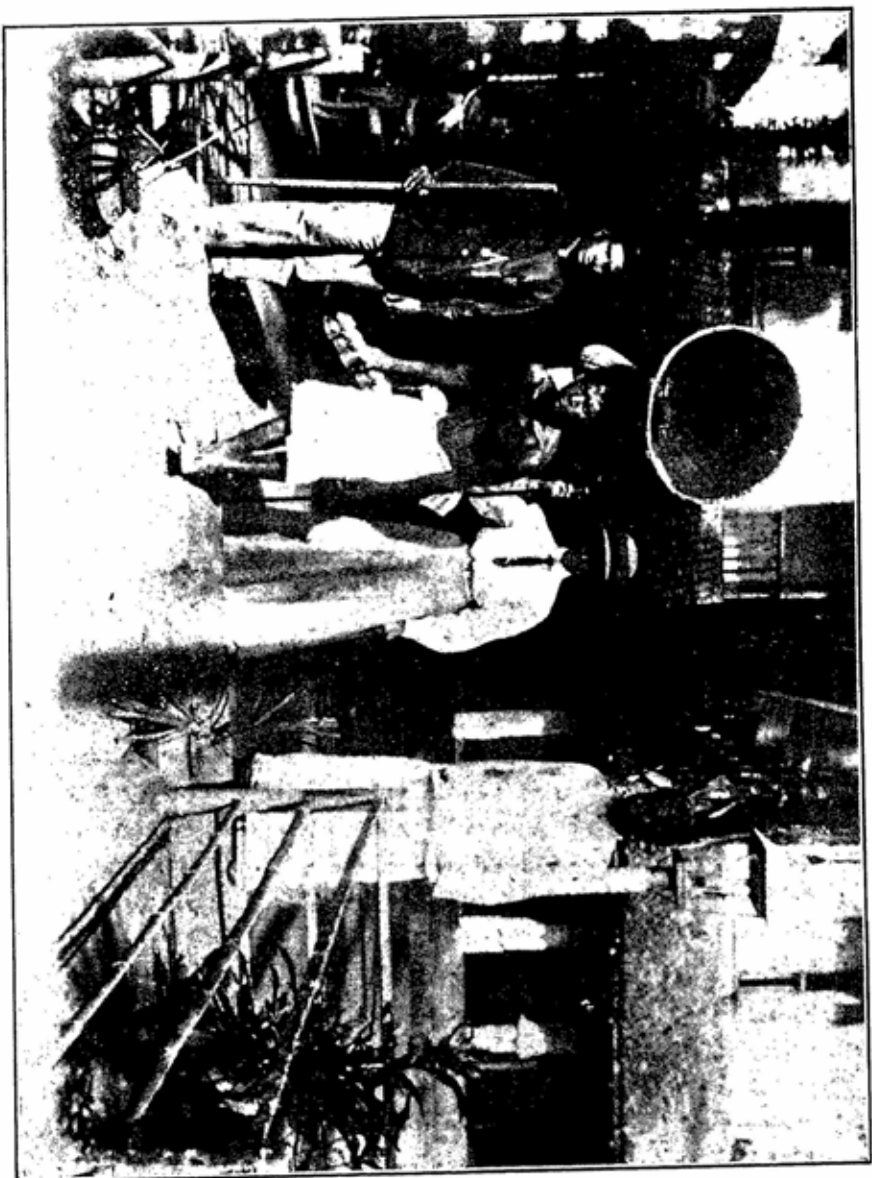
*Occupation*:—The Vèttuvans were, for a long time, the slaves of the high caste landlords, who in the old Raja days used to hire and sell these human chattels of their own and even exercise the power of life and death.\* Even at the present day it is not unlikely that hiring and mortgaging are not altogether unknown. As a rule, however, these jungle people are very devoted and loyal to their overlords, and would not think of deserting them so long as their wants are supplied. As soil slaves they do every kind of agricultural work such as ploughing, sowing, transplanting, weeding, reaping, for which each Vèttuvan and Vèttuvathi (Vèttuva woman) get  $1\frac{1}{2}$  measures of paddy doled out to them at sunset, when the day's work is over. Very often the landlords give some of them small plots of land for their own cultivation, the produce of which may go to them. When a Vèttuvan is engaged for labour by a landlord for the first time, he gives him a knife and Valli wages (four measures of paddy), and

\* Vide "Cochin Tribes and Castes, Chap." VI., pp. 90-96.

the acceptance of this signifies that he has to work under him for the whole year at the usual rates of wages. They are engaged in *Ponam* cultivation (cultivation on dry land, generally on the slopes of hills). This begins about December, when the forests are cleared; and the plants which are allowed to dry, are burned in February, when the regular operation of sowing is taken up and the harvest takes place in August. The tax for this is generally paid by the landlord. At times when they have no regular work, these people, who are ardent sportsmen, and fond of monkey's flesh, organise a party to go for hunting. Few of them beat the game, while others, who provide themselves with bows, arrows, and knives, aim at them. The animals thus hunted are generally hares, monkeys, porcupines, and even tigers. They have a peculiar method of hunting at night, which is called bell-hunting. A skilful Vêttuvan with a conical basket on his head and with a kind of lamp burning therein, begins to dance, holding a small wooden frame in each hand to which four bells are attached. (See illustration.) The sound of the bells attract the game in the neighbourhood of the forests. As the beasts approach him, other Vêttuvans, who are on each side of him and who are provided with bows, arrows, and guns, aim at them. This is one of their favorite pastimes. As has been said, they collect the minor forest produce of the jungles in North Malabar.

*Food* :—The routine dietary of the 'Vêttuvans' consist in taking some rice kanji, or gruel, early morning before they go to work, and this is often a portion of what they preserve out of their previous night's meal. Boiled rice and curry are taken during nights. They also refresh themselves with toddy when they can afford. This is their regular food during the busy months of the year, when they get regular wages for their work. During the other months when they have no sufficient work they subsist on jungle jams and roots, and the flesh of the animals they hunt. They are an unclean sort of people who will eat anything down to carrion, and yet they profess their superiority to the Cherumans and Pulayans and are careful not to be polluted by them.

In appearance they are dark in colour and below the medium height. Their type or cast of countenance is almost negritic. Their women also have the same complexion, and many of them whom I have seen appear to be dwarfish. The men wear a small loin cloth which seldom covers the knees. There is also a small under-garment, which is a strip of cloth tied to a string passing round the loins, and this is worn to cover exposure. Four small pieces of cloth are given them by their masters during Ónam (the national festival in Malabar) during August or September. Their women, on the other hand, wear three clusters of long forest leaves tied



Bell Hunting.



round the waist with a rolled cloth, and these leaves are changed for fresh ones every morning. It is curious to note that they refused to change this leafy costume; for according to tribal legend,\* when costumes were distributed by the deity to the various races of the earth, the Vêttuva-women, being asked to choose between a costume which needed to be changed daily, and one which needed to be changed only yearly, readily expressed their preference for the former; and the deity, considering the unpardonable piece of vanity, decreed that henceforth women should dress in leaves gathered fresh every morning, so that any modification would be justifiable only if the goddess would appear in person and revoke her mandate. The costume thus worn every day is thrown aside the next morning in an unfrequented part of the forest and anybody, either seeing it or treading on it, is believed to be bewitched by devils. Males wear no ornaments, generally for want of means, and a few of them who can afford wear brass ear-rings, and rings for fingers. Women wear necklaces of small beads. Men wear top knots, and the women, drawing the hair from the sides and back, tie it into a knot at the top of the head.

The Vêttuvans, when left to themselves, are quite incapable of progress, and in their semi-savage state, exhibit a stunted mind and a dull content with their surroundings which induce mental stagnation, cessation of all upward progress and even retrogression towards the brute. Dwelling as they do in swampy jungles, living in the coarsest fare and utterly regardless of personal cleanliness, it is not surprising to see that their number is steadily decreasing. They will probably be soon extinct before long as a distinct race either through the continued operation of the causes which are working now to diminish their number or through their being absorbed by the levelling influences of Western Civilisation and Christian Missionary effort into the other sections of the general population.

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\* There is a corresponding legend among the Juangs of the Mahanadi basin. The women of this tribe also wear leaves when strangers are about, but believe that their gods would get angry if they worshipped in dress. During their national festival of worshipping the goddess, the goddess of the Mahanadi, they discard the unorthodox encumbrance and offer their worship in a state of nature.

TRICHUR,  
2nd June, 1910.

}

L. K. ANANTAKRISHNA AIYAR.



## STONE BARROWS NEAR BANGALORE.

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A short while ago I happened to be in camp at the village of BUTANHALLI which is about two miles a little S. of W. of the village of BANERGATTA on the ANEKAL road, 12½ miles from Bangalore. These two villages lie on the northern boundaries of a rugged hilly country, fairly thickly covered with jungle. While there, I happened to come across, on the hills which lie between these two villages, some stone barrows, or what I take to be barrows. The stone slope of these hills are littered with boulders, the debris of ruined and scattered barrows, and in among these boulders lie the barrows, in most cases quite ruinous. There are four, however the largest of all, of which enough remains to enable one to gather their construction and size. Three of these are in one row, lying roughly N. & S. and close to each other, and from a short distance look like large heaps of stone. These heaps stand about 6 feet high, with a diameter at the base of roughly 35-40 feet. Climbing to the top of one of these heaps, one is confronted with a cup shaped hollow, the lower portion of which is seen to be constructed of flattish boulders piled and built up very carefully, so as to form a chamber, six sided, and quite coffin-like in shape, except that the breadth is far greater in proportion to the length, than in that of the modern coffin. The inside measurement across the top of this chamber is roughly length seven feet, and breadth four feet. The depth I have been unable to gauge, owing to there being a quantity of broken stone and sand in the chamber. This however cannot be more than three feet, as the barrow is built on the face of smooth solid rock. (Unless of course the builders have hollowed out the rock below to increase the depth, a labour I do not think they would have been likely to undertake, and I have found no sign of such hollowing in other and smaller barrows on the same side.)

The orientation of these chambers is E. and W., the broader end being at the West. At a short distance S. from these three barrows but not in the same line lies No. 4. This barrow has the large covering stone in situ and has apparently been broken into from the sides, the riflers possibly finding themselves unable to remove or break up the cover stone. The walls of the chamber of No. 4, owing to these holes giving an uneven distribution of weight of the cover stone, have bulged, but show the same careful construction inside as do those of the other. Apparently, after having built up the walls to form the chamber of one of these barrows (the outside perimeter also shows signs of careful construction; the centre barrow of the three first showing signs of having been perfectly circular at the base outside) and the large cover stone



Central view of Barrows Nos. 2 & 3.



Barrow No. 4.



Barrow No. 2 looking into N. W. corner.  
Note the construction of the inner wall.



Barrow No. 2 looking into S. W. corner.

having been put in place, boulders were thrown over the whole construction, to a height perhaps of 10 feet. A few of these boulders still remains on the cover stone of No. 4, the rest have been thrown off, and lie piled round outside the base. No. 2 shows signs of small subsidiary chambers in the thickness of the wall. Excavation of these barrows would be a very simple job. Half a dozen labourers from the neighbouring village would do all the necessary work in a day.

C. D. GREGSON.

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## REVIEWS.

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### *The Cochin Tribes and Castes—Vol. I*

BY MR. L. K. ANANTAKRISHNA AIYAR, B.A., L.T.

This is the first of three volumes, and gives an ethnographic account of the more primitive tribes and castes of Cochin. In doing this laudable work Mr. Aiyar has spared no pains to give the information in a form ready for reference. The work is introduced to the public by two ethnologists of great repute. John Beddoe and A. H. Keane standing sponsors to the work, any praise from a comparative layman would be superfluous. The illustrations in the book are fairly full and quite representative. We would, however, offer a suggestion or two. Mr. Aiyar would do well to write the vernacular words and expressions according to some recognised system of transliteration; and add, wherever he uses a vernacular expression, its literal meaning. So long ago as A. D. 1881 Sir A. Croft, when Census Commissioner, drew attention to the disappearance by wholesale absorption into Hinduism of many of the primitive tribes worth studying from the point of view of the ethnologist. The time has after all come for the fruition of the hope then raised; and thanks to the enthusiastic exertions of Sir Herbert Risley the work has been begun in serious earnest. Mr. Anantakrishna Aiyar's volume before us is a specimen of the work that is being done and if all engaged in the work should show as much enthusiasm for the work as he, we shall soon have all that a scientific ethnologist will need, and then India's contribution to general ethnology would have been made. In the introduction to the volume under notice Dr. A. H. Keane raises the question of the racial elements composing the population of India and gives as his opinion that five such elements are traceable. He is, perhaps, needlessly severe upon those who hold the unity of the race in India and the Puranic evidence adduced therefor. It is not the fault of the evidence but of those that use it. The Puranas properly studied, would tend the opposite way, we fear. Coming to more recent authority than the Puranas we find that he is in direct antagonism to Sir Herbert Risley. There is a good deal to say in favour of the former's submerged Negro theory, but no theorising would be beyond cavil without complete and reliable data regarding all the variety of people that inhabit this continent. The same authority also hold, upon what appear to be good grounds, that the submerged Negro type is not that of Africa but that of the Malay Stock. Here again we want more light before we can arrive at any final conclusion. All the same we gladly welcome both Mr. Anantakrishna Aiyar's work and the theory of Dr. Keane as worthy the consideration of those who are interested in such questions.

S. K.

## NOTES.

Regarding Mr. Anantakrishna Aiyar's remark that the Vēṭṭuvans were invited from the Chola and Pandya countries, and their patois is a mixture of Malayalam with Tamil words etc., I should like to offer the following remarks:—In the Tamil classic called Silappadhikāram, one book, the 12th, is devoted to a description of the Vēṭṭuvans of those days. They are according to our author the same tribe as the 'Eyinar' or hunters. Their then habitat was between Pudukkottai and Madura. Their profession was on the highway. Murder and human sacrifice they appear to have delighted in. The author, an ascetic Chera Prince, gives a gruesome account of their habits of sacrifice to their patron goddess, who in a variety of names is none other than Durga or Chamundi. She is spoken of as a sister of Vishnu or more properly Krishna; and as the Virgin Goddess (Kanni). The keeper of the toddy shop, called here Salini, goes about the street calling out for the goddess in an ecstatic and prayerful fashion. The goddess manifests herself on a certain person. Promises of offerings of human head or blood or flesh are then made and the nocturnal enterprise on the highway is then undertaken.

If these Vēṭṭuvans are the originals of the Cochin Vēṭṭuvans and if their emigration took place through Kongu, the question arises whether all the different classes of hunters in all their different names might not have been one and the same. A careful comparison of the customs, habits and religious beliefs of the Beders, the Vedans, the Villis etc., would pay the trouble of collation and comparison. Before comparisons are instituted, however, any trace of the superculture of the Brahmin which is but too apparent among the Malabar tribes, will have to be separated. The result then would, in my opinion, go a long way towards solving the problem of the original inhabitants of South India.

S. KRISHNASWAMI AIYANGAR.

*In connection with Mr. Mervyn Smith's paper on "Gold in Ancient India" which appeared in No. 3 of this Journal, the following note has been received from the author:—*

*Mercury in Ancient India.*—It is generally admitted that India has no extensive deposits of the ores of Mercury, and that the Hindus obtained this metal from China by way of Thibet. In an ancient Tamil book on Medicine the Kalpistanam gives several preparations of mercury used by native vythians, and it is said that this drug was obtained from Kērela (Travancore) on the West Coast. In 1858 General Fitzgerald reported the finding of metallic mercury in the laterite near Cannanore. More recently cinnabar was said to be found on the Eastern Ghauts near Vizianagram.

During the delimitation of the Burmo-Chinese frontier a few years ago I was present at Sir Thirkell Whites' camp near Kulon. I was anxious to visit some Quicksilver mines near that town but on the Eastern or Chinese side, but the Chinese Mandarin who acted as Boundary Commissioner for China absolutely refused permission as he said the mines were outside the sphere of Burmese influence and belonged solely to China.

## AN ANTIQUARIAN DISCOVERY.

An interesting antiquarian discovery was recently made at Muthura (Muttra) which has an important bearing on the history of the Buddhists in India. The Pioneer, in an article on the subject, shows how the Pre-Mahomedan History of India has been built up from coins and inscriptions, and after referring to Asoka, Kanishka and Huvishka, the three Kushan Princes and patrons

of Buddhism, whose names have been preserved by inscriptions, proceeds. The latest known inscription of Kanishka is dated in the year 10, the earliest of Huvishka in the year 83. Notwithstanding the intermediate gap of several years it has been generally supposed that Huvishka was the immediate successor of Kanishka. The inscription which quite recently has come to light at Muthura proves this view to be erroneous. It supplies the name of a near king of the name of *Vasishka*, who evidently belonged to the Kushan dynasty and whose reign must have intervened between those of Kanishka and Huvishka, for the record is dated in the year 24. The discovery of this important record is due to Pandit Radha Krishna, who as Honorary Assistant Curator of Muthura Museum, has enriched the collection in his charge with numerous sculptures and inscriptions. The record in question is engraved on a stone pillar, more than 19 feet high, which the Pandit discovered in the village of Isâpur or *Hansganj* on the left bank of Jamna opposite the city of Muthura. The place was named after Mirza Isa Yurkhan, Governor of Muthura, in the first year of Shah Jahan's reign. As appears from the inscription the pillar served the purpose of a sacrificial post and was set up by a Brahmin of Bharadvaja Gotra named Dronila, son of Rudrila, while performing a sacrifice of twelve days, whereas nearly all the inscriptions hitherto found at Muthura are either Buddhist or Jain. The present epigraph is of interest as being Brahminical and composed in pure Sanskrit. It is one of the earliest epigraphical records in that language known to exist, for it should be remembered that the earliest Indian inscriptions, e.g., those of Asoka, are written in local dialects known as Prakrit. The inscribed pillar has now been removed to the Muthura Museum through the care of Pandit Radha Krishna. All those who take an interest in antiquarian research, have every reason to be grateful to the Pandit for thus preserving an important historical monument which but for his timely action might have been pounded into road ballast or put to some other utilitarian purpose.—*The Times of India*.

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## QUERIES.

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Can any of the members of the Mythic Society give me any information concerning "Boddu Rallu" stones which are usually erected before the village gate?

SYDNEY NICHOLSON.

*Jamalamadagu.*

1—7—10.

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## LECTURE PROGRAMME FOR 1910-1911.

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|---|--|
| 1. June 1910.<br>14th Wednesday.              | Vêttuvans, by Mr. L. K. Anantakrishna Aiyar.   |
| 2. July 1910,<br>13th Wednesday<br>9-30 P.M.  | Tribes and Country of Somaliland, by Capt. C. Hudson, I.M.S.                             |
| 3. August 1910.<br>10th Wednesday.            | Some Notes on the Jatakas, by Mr. N. S. Subba Rao, B.A. ( <i>Cantab.</i> )               |
| 4. September 1910.<br>14th Wednesday.         | The Light thrown by the Sacrifices to Village Deities on the Original Idea of Sacrifice. |
| 5. October 1910.<br>11th Tuesday<br>9-30 P.M. | Vijayanagar, by the Rev. A. R. Slater.   |
| 6. November 1910.<br>9th Wednesday.           | History and Commerce of the Arabian Sea, by Major Grey, I.A.                             |
| 7. December 1910.<br>14th Wednesday.          | The Brahmanaic Systems of Religion, by Mr. M. T. Narasimha Aiyengar, B.A.                |
| 8. February 1911.<br>8th Wednesday.           | The Hoysalas in the South, by Mr. H. Krishna Sastri, B.A.                                |
| 9. March 1911.<br>8th Wednesday.              | Hale Payikas of Mysore, by Mr. N. Subba Rao, B.A.  |

**N.B.**—*The dates are subject to alteration.*



## THE MYTHIC SOCIETY.

### RULES.

1. The Society shall be called the MYTHIC SOCIETY.
2. The Society was formed with the object of encouraging the study of the Sciences of Ethnology, History and Religions, and stimulating research in these and allied subjects.
3. Membership shall be open to all European and Indian gentlemen, who may be elected by the Committee.
4. The Society shall be managed by a Committee consisting of the President, three Vice-Presidents, the Honorary Treasurer, two Joint Honorary Secretaries, three Branch Secretaries, the Editor, and five other members, retiring annually but eligible for re-election.

Any four of the above members to form a quorum.

5. The subscription shall be:—

- (a) For members resident in Bangalore, Rupees five per annum.
- (b) For members resident elsewhere in India, Rupees three per annum. These subscriptions are payable on election, or annually, on or before July 1st. The Honorary Treasurer may recover any subscription which may remain unrecovered at the time the second number of the Journal is issued by sending the second number by V. P. P.

Membership is open to residents in the United Kingdom, the subscriptions being four shillings annually, a remittance of twelve shillings covering subscriptions for three years. Subscriptions from the United Kingdom may be remitted by "British Postal Order" to the Honorary Treasurer, Mythic Society, Bangalore.

6. The transactions of the Society shall be incorporated and published in a Quarterly Journal which will be sent *free* to all members, and which will be on sale at 12 annas per copy to non-members.
7. There will be nine Ordinary Meetings in each Session, at which lectures will be delivered; due notice being given by the Secretaries.
8. Excursions to places of Historical interest, will be arranged and intimated to members.
9. Members may obtain, on application to the Secretaries, invitation cards for the admission of their friends to the lectures.
10. The Annual General Meetings will be held in March.
11. Framing and alteration of Rules rests entirely with the Committee.

S. KRISHNASWAMI AIYANGAR, {  
F. J. RICHARDS,                   } *Joint Secretaries.*

# THE MYTHIC SOCIETY.

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